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EUROPEAN CINEMA AFTER 1989

Cultural Identity and Transnational Production

LUISA RIVI

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Luisa Rivi

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European Cinema after 1989: Cultural Identity and Transnational Production
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Printed in the United States of America.

To my father, the first Europeanist, and my mother.

Per mio padre, il primo Europeista, e mia madre.

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Contents

List of Figures		ix
Acknowledgments		xi
Introduction: For an Imperfect Europe		1
I	**Europeanism And and Its Discontents**	**11**
1	The Political Discourse around the European Union: A Supranational Europe	13
2	The Return of the Repressed: European Cinema and the New Coproductions	39
II	**In Search of Unlost Narratives**	**75**
3	Nostalgia as a Weak Utopia for Europe	77
4	*Underground* and the Balkanization of History	91
III	**Odysseys**	**109**
5	Postcolonial Europe	111
6	Toward a Global European Cinema	137
Notes		143
Bibliography		177
Index		189

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List of Figures

Figure 2.1	*No Man's Land*: Ciki and Nino in the trench	69
Figure 2.2	*No Man's Land*: Cera on the bounding mine	71
Figure 3.1	*Nostalghia*: The Russian wife and the Italian translator	80
Figure 3.2	*Nostalghia*: Domenico on the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius	82
Figure 3.3	*Nostalghia*: Andrei and the Russian dacha inside the Italian cathedral	84
Figure 4.1	*Underground*: Marko, Nataljia, and Blacky at Jovan's wedding, underground	96
Figure 4.2	*Underground*: The island drifting away	104
Figure 5.1	*Lamerica*: Spiro-Michele and Gino: The exodus from Albania	117
Figure 5.2	*Lamerica*: The boat sailing for Italy	121
Figure 5.3	*La promesse*: Assita and Igor walking to the railway station	124
Figure 5.4	*Code inconnu*: The old French Arab, Anne, and the young French Arab on the metro	127
Figure 5.5	*Caché*: Majid, the Algerian immigrant, and Georges, the French intellectual	131
Figure 5.6	*Caché*: Majid: "I wanted you to be present."	133

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INTRODUCTION

For an Imperfect Europe

In November 1989, the Berlin Wall was demolished by crowds cheering and drinking toasts to it on both sides; there in ruins was the symbol of the Cold War bipolarism that had molded Europe, as well as the entire world, after World War II. In August 1991, an unexpected and aborted coup in Moscow finally decreed the breakup of the Soviet Union and the failure of the Communist experiment, which had survived as one of the two great totalitarianisms of the twentieth century. These events were followed by a series of other upheavals that paved the way for the reappearance of old nationalisms, as well as for the emergence of new nation-states in Central and Eastern Europe, and that also provoked the resurgence of destabilizing separatist movements in Western Europe. The post–Cold War era thus began by plunging Europe into a state of chaos and, for many, outright decline. A broader but less visible disturbance accounts for a Europe "on the verge of a nervous breakdown:" the phenomenon of globalization, which further eroded borders through the explosion of multinational economic corporations, borderless telecommunication systems, an unparalleled international division of labor, and global mobility. These factors all occurred within a short time frame, with the destruction of the Berlin Wall representing an encompassing historical marker and signifier par excellence.

The diversified transformations on the historical, economic, and sociocultural levels have produced, and continue to produce, constant, almost daily "visions and revisions" that render the task of talking about Europe exceedingly problematic, relative, and provisional at best. Nevertheless, or rather because of such uncertainty, it is important to understand how Europe is redefining itself as territory, political entity,

and founding myth of Western thinking. One must ask precisely which Europe is being conjured up in the often-apocalyptic overtones of its alleged ending: Is it the geographical entity in an ongoing state of deterritorialization and reterritorialization? Or is it the overdetermined and essentialized idea of Europe, that mythical site of civilization, which no longer corresponds to its imagined legacy? These perceptions are superimposed onto each other, and contemporary "Europe" evokes both meanings, becoming a highly contested signifier.

Cinema is a privileged site of this interrogation, as it engages on the one hand with the politics of cultural production and thus offers the possibility to map a new Europe through industry practices, media regulations, and specific film policies; on the other hand, it uniquely provides images for a changed European imaginary. Specifically, recent cinematographic coproductions envision and present new ways to rethink Europe in its geopolitical and symbolic configuration. *European Cinema after 1989: Cultural Identity and Transnational Production* seeks to investigate the role and status of cinema as institution and industry in designing a post–Cold War Europe. The question it wants to address is this: How do the new coproductions construe post-1989 Europe and European cinema as possible sites of identification and recognition for old and new Europeans?

The first area of inquiry concerns the phenomenon of supranationalism vis-à-vis cinematographic coproductions after 1989. The lamented fragmentation of Europe stands as a parallel and opposing discourse of the post–Cold War era; it is one that aims for integration and recentering through the constitution of "one common European home," as Mikhail Gorbachev expressed it with keen foresight in 1986. Many events, like the creation of the Single European Market in the same year, the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the circulation of the new common currency—the Euro—in eleven countries in January 2002, and the enlargement from its original six member states to twenty-seven in 2007, mark a new centripetal tendency: the progressive affirmation of Europe as a political entity, one in the likeness of an "imagined political community," as Benedict Anderson would have it.[1] The fact is that it is not a nation but an expanding cluster of nation-states that are coming together into a supranational Europe in the attempt to bestow a pan-European identity on highly differentiated and multilinguistic nations.

Through its economic and legal provisions, as well as its transnational organs, the European Union (EU) has created a supranational structure

that is able simultaneously to accommodate and maintain the opposing phenomena of localism, micro- and macro-regionalism, and the new nation-states that are puncturing the revised post-1989 map of Europe. These supranational enterprises mark a shift from the bipolar configuration established after World War II to a polycentric one, where multiple powers at the local, national, and global levels coexist within, as well as create, a supranational framework. Such a change seems to support the notion that the nation-state, considered to be a specifically European product, has become obsolete. Recently it has become fashionable to discuss Europe in postnational terms, with traditional boundaries being blurred and deemed to become unrecognizable, but this misses the larger point. It is precisely the persistence of the nation-state, with its form of political associations and communal belonging that will provide a unique opportunity to shape and sustain such a supranational enterprise. Yet for this to happen, the conventional meaning of the nation-state must be rearticulated in different ways. The rearticulation must proceed along the paths of heterogeneity and the idea of overlapping communities that can ultimately account for a supranational reconfiguration of post–Cold War Europe that is neither dualistic nor postnational.[2] Only the preservation *cum* transformation of the distinctive nation-states through the recognition of other nations may enable a restructuring of Europe that can be both inclusive and cognizant of its plural and multiple identities.

The peculiar mixture of heterogeneous political configurations and overlapping spheres of belonging is epitomized by the new cinematographic coproductions. Such films combine the more political tendencies of this trend with the more recent needs of corporate capitalism, global distribution, and consumption. As an amalgam of different sources, such as television, private and independent financing, and state interventionism, cinematic coproductions between different European countries bring into question the principles and contradictions at work in the project of a supranational Europe. As such, they allow investigating and illuminating the reshaping of a European cultural identity.

Coproduction agreements are certainly not new: The first bilateral treaties between Italy and France date back to 1946. They reached their peak in the 1960s, at the time of the economic boom, and declined by the 1970s because of a drop in attendance and changing viewing habits, only to be revived and reshaped primarily as broadcasting organizations during the 1980s. This was chiefly the result of technological advances, as well as revolutionary efforts to deregulate the audiovisual media.

However, there has been a profound shift in orientation. Although such forms of cooperation were and still are first and foremost motivated by economic concerns, the new coproduction agreements foreground a previously nonexistent cultural dimension.[3] As much as they are realizations of multinational late capitalism, the new treaties and the new so-called "co-financial agreements"—limited to merely financial collaboration—are nevertheless in alignment with the objectives of a supranational Europe. Consonant with this notion, the specifically created European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production, established by the Council of Europe in 1992, was designed to "safeguard and promote the ideals and principles which form [a] common heritage" while being "an instrument of creation and expression of cultural diversity." It is precisely this joint goal—to shape a common European identity while acknowledging old and new configurations—that makes the cinematographic coproductions of the 1990s the most fertile terrain for redefining European identity. The issue is a particularly thorny one, given the almost unanimous dismissal of coproduction agreements as a threat to the existence of national cinemas. The discourse around coproduced films in a post–Cold War Europe articulates the dilemma that lies at the core of the new Europeanism: the tension between a supranational framework and the individual national identities that underlies the project of a different Europeanness.

No medium is better suited than cinema to engage in the discussion of the construction and dissemination of national identity. Since its inception, cinema has constituted a privileged site at which to construct and transmit the idea of nationhood, not only for a domestic audience, but for an international one as well.[4] A case in point would be the neorealist movement in Italy after World Word II. The film *Paisà* (*Paisan*, Roberto Rossellini, 1946) attempted to forge an identity for postwar Italy, by coalescing a nation, an "imagined community" around recent constitutive elements—that is, around new myths, like the suffering of the common people under the Fascist regime, the role of the Resistance, and the sacrifice of Italians and Allies alike. It did not matter that only about 10 percent of the films produced in Italy at the time were neorealist and they were not very popular; those "happy few" managed to establish the image of a new Italy abroad. This is aptly demonstrated by *Sciuscià* (*Shoeshine*, Vittorio De Sica, 1946), which won a special Academy Award in 1947, and by *Ladri di biciclette* (*Bicycle Thieves*) also by De Sica, which received the first Best Foreign Language Film Oscar in

1948. Eventually it was the handful of neorealist movies that would garner international legitimization for Italy despite the Italian government's initial refusal to identify with those images. Indeed, the ultimate irony was that the very same films that were supposedly "slandering Italy abroad"[5] were instead able to rehabilitate the nation and give it a new identity. Furthermore, the fact that Italians of the postwar era would rather watch the melodramas of Raffaello Matarazzo and the highly successful series of *Don Camillo* movies only reveals what was at stake in the neorealist project, namely, the forging of a new nation and ultimately reinforcing the power of the cinema. What Lenin had defined as "the most powerful art" could produce images of a unified national identity, as the neorealist films did, while simultaneously discrediting it by producing other images, other identities—the ones in the melodramas and the B-films of *Don Camillo*—that undermined the selfsame idea of the nation and as such were not recognized by the domestic official culture or considered internationally viable.[6]

Because of such national and international interface in the constitution of identities, nations, and diasporic communities, the films discussed here have either been entries or have earned awards in international festivals; the transnational visibility and the official legitimacy granted by critics and awards are loci for forging different perceptions and different imaginings of Europe. The analyses of specific films will help concretize the historical, conceptual, and philosophical ideas that inform a supranational Europe. These films present a mutated post-1989 reality and the new cultural identities that are emerging; as such they help change received notions of a uniform or homogeneous national identity.

The words of the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats perhaps best capture the perception of a crumbling Europe after 1989: "Things fall apart: the center cannot hold." They evoke the myth of Europe as center, and the correlated specter of Eurocentrism, as that phenomenon that claims European values as universal. In 1979, Jean François Lyotard referred to this phenomenon as a belief in the *grands récits*, or the master narratives of Western culture, namely, notions of scientific knowledge, progress, history, nation-state, liberation, God, truth, and humanism.[7] The most compelling films made in Europe after 1989 engage with such concepts and provide a challenging arena in which to discuss what can be considered the legacy and the conceptualization of the West from Plato through the Enlightenment. In a more speculative vein, Lyotard has

acknowledged the profound crisis of the metanarratives. In concrete historical terms, the dismantling of the Soviet Union, the demise of the Cold War, the reemergence of nationalisms in both the West and the East, savage corporate capitalism, the ascent of technology, and globalization and its perceived terrors have all combined to slowly erode those old and reassuring beliefs and narratives, although they had begun to be questioned even after World War I. Lyotard admits to the disappearance of the master narratives in a universe that no longer functions according to totalizing and unitary criteria. In *European Cinema after 1989*, I argue that such narratives have in fact not been abandoned but are still present and operative. However, they need to be reformulated to reflect a new heterogeneous reality. In fact, such ideals continue to inform not only the project of an encompassing Europeanness but also the making of old and new nation-states in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics, as well as the inclusion of unprecedented flows of migrants from both the ex-European colonies and the ex-Communist empire. They operate differently, though, not as universal and unitary concepts aimed at repressing differences and realizing a uniform social order but as working principles that acknowledge other ways, other cultures, other histories, and other languages. The multiple subjects and nations that contemporary European movies envision challenge a monolithic configuration of Europe and attempt to reconfigure it into a heterogeneous, hybrid, and polycentric space so as to take into account multiple subjectivities, nations, and realities.

The Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo offers a highly productive theoretical framework for understanding the crisis of European myths and their different repositioning in post-1989 Europe and European cinema. He claims that the current historical moment represents "the end of modernity,"[8] by which he refers to the accomplishment, but not the decadence, of the modern beliefs in reason, progress, history, logic, and the like. Such ideals have been realized and fulfilled, but they have not disappeared. In this vein, he stands very much against other thinkers like Jean Baudrillard, who does away with the past in his seductive theorization of the simulacra, and Fredric Jameson, who proclaims the demise of modernity only to reveal how much he is still wrapped in a "nostalgic Hegelianism," in the words of Edward Said.[9] Instead, Vattimo formulates the idea of "weak thought" and the concurrent "ontology of decline" to refer to the exhaustion *cum* redirection—not the vanishing—of the project

of modernity. In this way, he is able to retain the legacy of the past, the myths of Western Enlightenment, but in a "declined" way, a weakened and softened form, where "weakening" is not to be perceived negatively—as it is often ordinarily used—but rather represents a valuable opportunity, the opportunity to think differently, because it opens up a field of possibilities. Europe can thus be reconfigured in a different way, a way that still allows for the presence of its grand narratives. Yet they need to be inflected and accented by the presence of other cultures, other participants, and different modalities. Ultimately, the Europe facing the dissolution of its myths is reconstituting itself by transforming and "weakening" those very myths according to its changed reality or realities; at the same time, a mutated reality and its multiple subjects have undertaken transformation and redefinition of the cultural identity of Europe.

In this vein, the epistemological grid offered by Vattimo allows for a profound critique of Western essentialism predicated on the form of dualistic thinking that has produced the construct of Eurocentrism. In a most convincing analysis of the phenomenon, Edward Said has unflinchingly demonstrated how this mode of European thinking produced the obverse construct of Orientalism so as to empower and legitimize the Occident, namely, Europe.[10] The fact is that the notion of Eurocentrism has been taken to be coterminous with Europe, thereby reducing everything European first to a supposed affirmation of "superiority" and later reducing it to its demonization as source of all evil. In *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam seem to be aware of the conflation of European with Eurocentric. They even uncover a form of inverted Eurocentricism; by making Europe the culprit of all social evils, they remark how Europe, instead of losing its supremacy, is always positioned as the active subject and ultimately the structuring pole.[11] The collision of European and Eurocentric precisely raises the question: Is it possible to be European without being Eurocentric? Or, put slightly differently, How can Europe be redefined outside of a Eurocentric perspective so that a de-eurocentrized Europe can finally become European, that is to say, no longer the structuring pole, but one structure among many? The films that I have chosen point in this direction, toward envisioning what I would deem an imperfect Europe. The term here has to be understood in light of the dual meaning of imperfect: neither having achieved a faultless status nor having been completed. If the status of post-1989 Europe is imperfect in the sense that the European project of integration

is incomplete, it is important that that project should be and stay imperfect, so as never to achieve the repressing and totalizing "perfection" that turned Europe into "the cradle of civilization."

On the road to imperfection, a new Europe must face its legacy of having been "the cradle of colonialism," as it finds itself today in a postcolonial angst precisely because of that past. Postcoloniality must be construed as both the historical marker of the end of colonialism and a methodology aimed at deconstructing the universalizing Eurocentric discourse of colonialism by tracing the effects and consequences of colonization and denouncing the persistence of colonial practices—this time repositioned on different economic and cultural grounds, but still yielding a neocolonial stance. A postcolonial discourse would eventually allow new voices to speak, and it is in this sense that I have identified films that conjure up a postcolonial Europe, a Europe that is able to acknowledge many voices instead of imposing its one and only.

Contemporary European cinema engages with the legacy of colonization at its site of origin. It specifically addresses migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, diasporic communities, and *extracomunitari* (those outside the EU) who move in the opposite direction, from the peripheries to the metropole, toward an encounter that the ex-colonizer fears and feels as a reversed invasion. Many coproduced films deal with the effects of traditional colonialism, as well as with that particular form of colonization represented by Communist rule, to which Central and Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet republics had been subjected until 1989. These films unravel the contradictions that are paving the way for Europe to become truly "European" and no longer Eurocentric. They evoke relationships where the one-to-one colonial positioning has shifted into a hybridity that may harbor different standings and thus challenge assumed notions of cultural identity. Coproductions are hybrids that respond to the new European policies to promote and reflect a "cultural diversity" by bringing into question patterns of duality and antagonism and refashioning them into more nuanced and ambivalent composites.

The book is organized around a few basic issues that address how cinema is redefining Europe in the post–Cold War era: supranationalism, cinematographic coproductions, the persistence—although altered—of grand narratives, and the emergence of a postcolonial Europe.

In Part I, Chapter 1, "The Political Discourse around the European Union: a Supranational Europe," explores the new politico-economic

cartography of Europe and grounds the idea of Europeanism, which will be later articulated by the cinema of this period. The demise of the Soviet empire, the onset of globalization, and the completion of decolonization on the part of the Western empires are responsible for the revival of the European movement around the historical and symbolic date of 1989. A new supranational Europe emerges from the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which maintains but transforms the Europeanism that first created the European Economic Community (otherwise known as the Common Market) by means of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. I specifically argue for a supranational reconfiguration of Europe to be grounded on the permanence of the nation-state. I assert the validity of the construct while I also point out the changes that are responsible for a different employment of the concept in the context of an enlarged Europe.

Chapter 2, "The Return of the Repressed: European Cinema and the New Cinematographic Coproductions," takes issue with those elements through which a "new" Europe is being construed and rendered visible: recent cultural policies, and specifically, cinematographic coproductions. While the old treaties never addressed the issue, "culture" has instead become the catalyst in mobilizing a new Europe. David Harvey, along with many others, has observed that in the current multinational universe of late capitalism—to which Europe belongs—culture functions as merchandise; it singles out consumers and then proceeds to market itself as a commodity in a spiraling market.[12] But culture exceeds this function: if the new coproductions spring unquestionably from a financial necessity, they also work to articulate and express needs of a different symbolic nature. Contemporary coproduced films portray and articulate a supranational Europe that responds to these needs. I will discuss, in particular, two highly significant films, *Land and Freedom* (Ken Loach, 1995) and *No Man's Land* (Danis Tanović, 2001), because they both foreground and contest a new supranational imaginary for Europe.

Part II, *In Search of Unlost Narratives*, bears on textual analyses of two specific films that address recent mutations and therefore render a new reconfiguration of Europe very concrete. Chapter 3 presents a reading of *Nostalghia* (1983) that shows how Andrei Tarkovsky both works within the grand narrative of dialectics and transgresses it. He does not abandon but reworks this foundational myth of modern Western thinking on the grounds that it enables him to conjecture a synthesis of different nature, a "weakened" synthesis in the terms employed by the philosopher Gianni

Vattimo. The Russian director advances this hypothesis as the means by which to reconfigure a new Europe in the specific historical circumstances offered by the demise of the Soviet Union.

In Chapter 4, I take issue with what is considered the European myth of legitimization par excellence: history. History is said to have failed and thus should be discarded in our present condition of postmodernity. Emir Kusturica's *Bila jednom jedna zemlja (Underground*, 1995) is a response to this indictment, because the film enacts the breakup of Yugoslavia in all its implications. The film engages with the historical referent and foregrounds the persistence of history while it subjects the process of historical construction to a devastating and illuminating critique. *Underground* raises the issue of the very nature of historical production and compels us to reassess history instead of dismissing it on the grounds of its "balkanized" form.

In Part III, *Odysseys*, I posit Europe as being in a postcolonial condition and examine diversified constructs of this configuration by resorting to the Western trope of the odyssey as the myth that had legitimized voyages of discovery and conquest for Western modernity. That myth has now been appropriated and reversed by the new migrants who travel to Europe to both offer their labor and transform the previous empires. Europe, the literal and figurative incarnation of colonialism, has actually turned into a postcolonial space where new immigrants, old migrants, and "Europeans" confront each other and need to shift their no-longer stable positions. Analyses of *Lamerica* (1994) by Gianni Amelio, *La promesse* (1996) by Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne, and *Code inconnu* (2003) and *Caché* (2005) by Michael Haneke allow exploration of different colonial positionings and point to a hybrid and decentralized makeup of contemporary Europe.

Part I

Europeanism and Its Discontents

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CHAPTER 1

The Political Discourse around the European Union

A Supranational Europe

World War II created Europe, or better yet, Western Europe: The unspoken assumption that by *Europe* we refer to Western Europe dates to recent times. By the same stroke, Eastern Europe became the "other Europe," comprising the satellites of the USSR in Eastern Europe, as well as the USSR itself. The Treaty of Yalta, the Cold War, the Iron Curtain and later the Berlin Wall restructured a Europe ravaged by war according to the principles of a geopolitical bipolarism, splitting the continent in two opposing blocs for decades. On the one side, Western Europe linked itself through consensus to the external hegemony of the United States of America. On the other, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Russia collapsed inward upon themselves and rapidly turned into a subaltern to the Communist colonizer and the increasingly coercive rule to which it subjected Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and the fourteen Soviet Republics.[1]

It was in the aftermath of the war that the "European Idea," as it was called—namely, the onset of an inchoate European unity or Europeanism—was officially addressed by Winston Churchill. The idea of a "Europe of the peoples" had been around since the Enlightenment, but as Samir Amin has pointed out, "At least until the end of World War II, each European country's enemy was another European country . . . It is only since 1945 that a common European consciousness has seemed to

be gaining the upper hand over local, provincial, and national sentiments."[2] It was on the occasion of the first Congress of Europe, organized in 1948 to debate the problems of a shattered Europe, that Churchill declared, "We must proclaim the mission and the design of a United Europe whose moral conception will win the respect and gratitude of mankind. . . . I hope to see a Europe where men and women of every country will think of being European as of belonging to their land, and wherever they go in this wide domain will truly feel 'Here I am at home.'"[3]

It was a statement of intent whose appeal for "a United Europe" was in the first place moral, not economic or political; it was historically motivated by the state of disintegration Europe had been left in after the war. It was therefore on the ground of high idealism that a common Europe was advocated at the time. And it was during this meeting that the concept of supranationalism was openly invoked and asserted. On that occasion, all the delegates "recognized the principle of 'supranationality': the need for states to surrender part of their sovereignty in the interest of common institutions."[4] The problem was that Churchill's views were not shared by the Labor Party, nor was that the time for a vision for Europe. The material conditions were a priority, while "history" was being written by Washington and Moscow. The idea of a supranational Europe was heralded at a particular juncture: the end of World War II, the tragedy of the Holocaust, the demise of nationalism in the extremist form of Nazism, the new East-West bipolarism, the appearance of two superpowers, and the urgency of material reconstruction. These factors bear evidence to the fact that "the 'European Idea' resurfaced, therefore, as an attempt to redress the deficiencies of the past and to meet the imperatives of the present and future."[5] If the project of a united Europe was first expressed in the idealistic tones adopted to counteract the harsh reality of its fresh splitting, it was nevertheless a historical response firmly grounded in a specific historical context. As has been acknowledged, "The emergence of a strong movement for the reshaping of the European system on new lines was not simply a product of the international idealism foreshadowed in the previous century but represented, rather, the recognition of an undoubted fact, and the collapse of the old European balance beyond repair."[6] In 1989, it was the collapse of the very same bipolar balance born out of that specific historical and material context that would reawaken and reshape the idea of a supranational Europe.

The first acts of postwar European integrationism were the Treaty of Brussels (1948) and the Council of Europe, COE (1949). While the COE had no real executive powers, the Treaty of Brussels was signed for defense purposes by Britain, France, and the Benelux region—Belgium-Netherlands-Luxembourg—after the Communist coup in Prague, out of fear of a Soviet attack. The treaty was the precursor of the new security alignments to be formally instituted as the Western European Union, WEU, in 1954. The initial impetus for the Western states' seeking of some form of communal alliance was defense. This historical need was further reinforced by the simultaneous creation of an institution—this time purposefully transnational—geared to coordinate U.S. involvement in Europe's defense and security: NATO, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Linking nine West European countries, the United States, and Canada, NATO was created in 1949; it was meant to be the primary tool for the containment of the USSR and the spread of Communism immediately after the brief Soviet-American interlude, when the former war allies of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union seemed destined to cooperate for the recovery of Europe. NATO emerged as part of the new bipolarism and became the principal instrument for the success of the Cold War, whose major accomplishment was to stabilize Europe at the same time that it secretly started to wear it away, thus laying the path for its subsequent destabilization.

A fundamental step toward European integration was the implementation in 1950 of the Schuman Plan, named after French Prime Minister Robert Schuman. This plan called for a common economic organization and a European army along with the prospect of the foundation of a "United States of Europe." Schuman's liberal and democratic credo was indebted to the vision of Jean Monnet, often considered "the father of Europe." Monnet firmly supported a theory of "functionalism" according to which different functions would have to be transferred from national to supranational control. It was with Monnet and Schuman that the three strands of the first Europeanism—the economic, the military and the political—were firmly established. They would, however, follow different paths at different speeds because of the individual historical necessities in which the European countries were implicated.

The very first act toward a more properly defined supranational Europe can be considered to have been the implementation in 1951 of the European Coal and Steel Community, or ECSC, which was a product of the Schuman Plan. This organ reasserted the primacy of the question of

security in Europe because the ECSC was specifically designed to prevent the emergence of a military-industrial base in each member country. At the same time, it was heralded as the official reconciliation between France and Germany after the end of the war. It is important at this point to try to unravel the supranationalism signified by the ECSC and what it meant at the time in its implications for cinema. Its state members were indeed overwhelmingly preoccupied with West Germany's *Wirtschafswunder*, or Economic Miracle. Actually, West Germany, left defeated and splintered in 1945, had been brought back to life by an inexhaustible flow of American money managed through the establishment of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an integral part of the Marshall Plan, which was specifically instituted by the United States to finance Europe's reconstruction from 1948 to 1951. Indeed, West Germany was about to gain formal sovereign status as the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) only one year later, in 1952, when it was also granted permission to rearm. In 1955, FRG would become a full member of NATO. On the one hand, West Germany was officially granted the status of a separate nation-state after the German Reich had been formally erased. On the other, however, the remaining Western countries felt threatened by the new legitimation and wealth of the resurging half of that ex-empire. The growing power of the new state had to be kept under surveillance and contained for the common good; this was rendered possible by way of the Schuman plan, which translated more into a reciprocal surveillance mechanism than into a supranational body geared to enhancing communal benefits. Notwithstanding the attempt toward a European dimension, the primary concern in the aftermath of World War II was the restoration of the state and its own sustenance. The blossoming of diversified national cinemas at the time bears witness to the need to reassert a national identity that had been threatened by the war.

An essential factor should be considered in determining the kind of supranationalism struggling to come into existence in Europe after 1945. The fact is that the Schuman Plan conformed to the international politics of the United States, whose paramount preoccupation was the infiltration of Communism into the new European "colonies." It is worth noting how the first signatories of the Treaty of Rome, "the Six"—France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg—were in fact geographically arranged around the western side of Germany: They could control Germany's military growth and constitute an outpost

against Soviet Communism. Certainly, the first implicit preoccupation of the new members was security: Both the Western European Union and the European Coal and Steel Community bear witness to this purpose. However, the postwar supranationalism was permitted to exist because it was complying with the interests and directives of the American hegemon: Europeanism was taking shape in the shadow of the United States.[7] Western Europe had been defeated, and was being revived through money by its savior and new conqueror.

Given the state of total postwar economic prostration, it is no surprise that the economy became the catalyst for unification and the terrain of Europe's best communal performance. Economic integration indeed became the driving force of the European movement with the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) by means of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The EEC was soon followed by the constitution of an organ based on similar economic premises: Euratom, the European Atomic Community. The three signifiers, "European," "economic," and "community" voice the ideals signified by the first transnational body: supranational collaboration and communal economic prosperity. The economy was the terrain where Europe would achieve its reconstruction, above all when American subsidies stopped flooding in when the Marshall plan was terminated in 1951. As historian Norman Davies has shown, the goals of the newly created community "were to remove all internal tariffs, to formulate a common external trade policy, to harmonize transportation, agriculture, and taxation, to eliminate barriers to free competition, and to encourage the mobility of capital, labor, and enterprises."[8] It was here in the sphere of the economy that truly integrationist results were achieved by the EEC in the creation of a customs-free zone and a common external tariff, as well as the implementation of its most successful scheme, the Common Agricultural Policy.

The first dictum of the Treaty of Rome, which established the common will to promote "an even closer union among the European peoples,"[9] was definitely limited and biased: first, "a closer union" was being implemented de facto in the narrow terms of an economic solidarity, and second, the "European peoples" referred to six Western countries only, while any reference to the "other Europe" was being repressed. Third, the Treaty of Rome does not contain any indication of either a European identity or a cultural policy in the EEC, a most remarkable omission in terms of the constitution of a European movement. The profession of a common identity and the impetus to foster Europeanness through culture, and

more specifically through cinema, was at odds with the pressure to recover the identity of the individual states by way of a set of economic measures taken in the common interest. To this end, Victoria de Grazia confirms that "during the post–Second World War, the quest for unity was largely defined in economic terms,"[10] as if economic reconstruction would automatically yield a larger European integration. Those who first designed the EEC's institutions believed that the Common Market would by itself propel a movement to "Europeanize" other spheres. "Their hypothesis was that trade issues, however narrowly defined initially, would ultimately connect to a wide range of other matters and initiate a snowball effect towards greater supranationality."[11]

The reality was more complex. EEC members were primarily concerned with their own national trajectories in terms of economic and social policies. They were worried that the new laws of the Common Market would subvert rather than accommodate the national laws of the single states. As a supranational organ, the Community was not to eliminate the fragile national governments reborn from the ashes of the war, but neither was it to be a neutral arena in which the states sought only to strengthen themselves by maximizing their advantages. Rather, the national interest was to be tamed with a supranational regime. The attempt to translate these principles into practice opened up from the onset the conflict between supranationalism and state sovereignty, Europeanism and nationalism.

Very soon after the implementation of the EEC, a tangible shift toward a strengthening of national rights was registered in 1966 with the Luxembourg Compromise headed by General de Gaulle. Originally, the Rome Treaty had envisaged principles of flexibility and majority in decision making so that it was possible to dispose of specific nations at the time of a highly problematic issue or impasse. But, as George Ross reveals, from the signing of the Luxembourg Compromise until the mid 1980s, "each EEC member acquired the right to invoke a national veto on matters it regarded as essential, implying a need to seek unanimity among member states."[12] Thus, the Compromise dramatically reduced the power of the supranational organ, the Council, while empowering the individual member-states; the outcome was that "the new Common Market thus became an intergovernmental—as opposed to supranational—operation."[13] It seems legitimate to conclude that postwar supranationalism was very much circumscribed in its effective implementation. The Luxembourg Compromise had reempowered the

single governments against communal welfare. This reveals that the call for Europeansim was predicated in the first place on the reaffirmation of the legitimacy of the individual governments; supranationalism could eventually prosper only if the nation-states gained political, economic, and social strength within and against the new international presence of the United States. The Six had first to reestablish their nation-states, which they accomplished mainly through a nationally based capitalist system, previously unknown and unpracticed. That is why the first moves toward supranationalism consisted mainly of national and intergovernmental strategies, as George Ross has also observed: "At a moment when EEC members were all deeply engaged in successful national trajectories in macroeconomic, industrial and social policy, there was little real demand for a substantial transfer of regulatory activities to a supranational level."[14] Before Europe could actually become supranational, the EEC members had to regain their national identity.

A very important issue is present in the original Treaty of Rome, one that reveals a dimension unexplored but fundamental to the particular configuration of Europeanism in 1957 and its subsequent restructuring. The scenario emerges in the preliminaries to the Treaty, which lay out the foundational principles of the new Community agreed upon by Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The principles were "to lay the foundations of an even closer union between the peoples of Europe . . . to secure the economic and social progress by eliminating the barriers dividing Europe . . . to improve the life conditions and the opportunities of employment of their peoples . . . to undertake a common action in order to guarantee stable and balanced exchanges . . . to confirm Europe's solidarity to the overseas countries in the desire to secure the development of their prosperity according to the principles established by the United Nations."[15]

The beginning of this passage clearly indicates the defensive, economic, and social objectives set up by the Community previously discussed: the state members want to "eliminate barriers," found "a closer union," and promote "social and economic progress." However, the last part introduces a totally new element: the acknowledgement of the ties of the EEC member states with "the overseas countries" (the colonies) as well as the willingness to reassure them of "Europe's solidarity" in the pursuit of the "development of their prosperity." These words bring to the foreground an unacknowledged issue of the first supranationalism: the status of the EEC as a colonial empire and the consequent presence

and permanence of the colonies. At the end of World War II, Western Europe was still the locus where traditional imperialism resided. The new imperialism of the United States and the Soviet Union were in fact of a different nature. In 1945 the Western European countries still held fast to their military and territorial possessions abroad. While Germany had lost its overseas colonies in 1919, and Italy had been deprived of Albania and its North African territories in 1946, the empires of Great Britain, Holland, France, Belgium, and Portugal remained largely intact. The fact that the colonies were mentioned in the preliminaries of the Treaty that establishes the EEC, grounds the centrality of the issue in the discourse on Europeanism. It leads to a legitimate question: How could the Six think of Europe when their attention was turned outwards, toward their dominions, colonies, or trusteeships? I would agree with Norman Davies that the European nations "had to lose their empires, and their hopes of empire, before governments would give priority to living with their neighbours."[16] At the same time, Eastern Europe was in a different colonial situation, that of being colonized by Communism. A double impossibility was thus in place: if the postwar survival of European colonialism posed an obstacle to the channeling of the different interests required by Europeanism, the quick expansion of a different type of colonialism in the "other Europe" was nonetheless confirming the historical impossibility of a European unification.

Ironically, at the same time that the Six took to decolonize their colonies, they had to acknowledge their new status of being colonized by the economic and cultural imperialism of the United States—an admission openly stated in the Rome Treaty, where it says that the whole colonial question had to be conducted "according to the principles established by the United Nations." And, as Norman Davies reveals, "The USA, on whom Western Europe now depended, was resolutely opposed to old-style colonialism; and so was the United Nations."[17] Such a preliminary to the Treaty of Rome confirms the readiness of the member states to consent to a subordinate status versus the American allies. Ultimately, such a consensus translated into a weakened European supranationalism in order for that supranationalism, as embodied by the EEC, to exist at all. It is important, though, to underline that the new status of the Western countries as American "colonies" did not invalidate at all the fact that protectionist measures were simultaneously undertaken by the national governments to resist the overpowering presence of the United States. That was indeed the time to

reconstitute—concretely and symbolically—the damaged national identities. But this could be done only under American military protection and economic subsidy, that is, by allowing the United States to become a superpower. A dual strategy was set in place: the member-states were enforcing different kinds of national and supranational protectionism while simultaneously acknowledging the economic dependence and symbolic subalternity of Europe. Ultimately, postwar Europeanism had to be subservient to the new hegemonic power in order to exist.

The Renewed Europeanism of 1989

Despite the dramatic changes to the cartography of Europe during the 1980s, the Cold War supranationalism shifted, but did not disappear altogether. On the contrary, it transformed and reasserted itself to accommodate the new economic reality and the more complex political and cultural geographies of Europe. I take the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the much-acclaimed reunification of Germany that followed in 1990, to mark the symbolic onset of a new era, taking into account other important factors that are responsible for reshaping the path of Europe. I am referring here to the sweeping deregulation of the 1970s, the advance and proliferation of information technology in the 1980s, and the consequent internationalization of the financial markets, all phenomena that launched the more recent era of globalization. If the oil crises of the late 1970s and the stagnation of capital, which had grown increasingly dependent on the national state, became strong indicators of the need to change the state of things, the forty year-long political equilibrium had already been showing signs of unrest and exhaustion before 1989.

It is necessary at this point to mention the historical events that led to the breaking-up of Europe as configured in 1945, as they shift the focus from Western to Eastern Europe: it was de facto the disruption of "the Other Europe . . . the last colonial empire in existence,"[18] which set into motion a renewed supranational Europe. The events that took place in Central and Eastern Europe finally demolished the bipolarism instituted after the Second World War. Such destabilization had already begun by an earlier changing of the guard in the southern Fascist outposts of Spain and Greece, namely, the safety belt of the Cold War in the South. Generalísimo Franco died in 1975, and the country could finally begin to face up to its Fascist past and turn instead to Europe, from which it had been severed in 1945.[19] In Greece, after the military dictatorship

enforced by the colonels' coup in 1967, the socialist minister Papandreu was eventually elected in 1981. Poland—the country that had always been at the forefront in the struggle against Soviet rule—first stirred during the late 1970s, thanks to the free labor union movement Solidarity, which was led by Lech Walesa, later repressed by Communist General Jaruzelski in 1981, and finally run by a Solidarity-controlled civilian government in 1989, the *annus mirabilis* of the new era. Free elections were held in 1992, and Lech Walesa became the temporary president. During the same period, the Baltic States were able to obtain formal independence from the USSR, with the silent support of Germany, which was anticipating its imminent reunification. In Budapest, the Hungarian People's Republic was abolished in the autumn of 1989, while Bulgaria declared a reform government by the end of the year. In Romania, Ceausescu's left-wing dictatorship was overthrown during Christmas 1989, and the dictator and his wife shot down while trying to escape. In Czechoslovakia, the nonviolent "velvet revolution" decreed, in only ten days, the end of the Communist rule under the guidance of poet and new president Václav Havel. Then the country separated peacefully into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. As to the USSR, in 1986 General Secretary Gorbachev announced a new era under the aegis of *glasnost* ("openness, transparency") and *perestroika* ("restructuring"). He specifically became the promoter of a new European order when, at the summit in Reykjavik in December 1987, he proposed to the astonished American president Ronald Reagan, a sensational 50 percent cut in all nuclear weapons. At last, at the Malta summit in December 1989, President George Bush and Gorbachev declared that the Cold War was over. The August coup of 1991 in Moscow precipitated the course of Gorbachev's actions and ultimately dealt the final blow to the Soviet empire. Russia held free elections and declared Boris Yeltsin its new president in June 1993, while the other fourteen republics were recognized as independent sovereign states. Yugoslavia, ruled by Tito until his death in 1981, was shattered in 1991 by an unprecedented bloody war in the name of ethnic and religious nationalisms. In 1995 the Dayton agreement acknowledged the disintegration and reterritorialization of the former Yugoslavia into Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Macedonia, while the conflict in the Balkans extended to Kosovo and Albania.

The new geopolitical redistribution of Europe has notably fueled the post-1989 European cinema. Films from and on Central and Eastern

Europe have especially drawn attention to the significance of the new events. A film by Romanian Cornelieu Porumboiu, *Au fost sau na fost*? (*12:08, East of Bucharest*, 2006) investigates whether the revolution really occurred on December 22, 1989, in a small town to the east of Bucharest, Vaslui. The owner and presenter of the local TV station, Jederescu, poses the question "Was [it] there or wasn't [it] there?"—the literal translation of the film's title—to a lonely pensioner, Piscoci, and to an alcoholic history professor, Manescu, an apparent eye witness to the upheaval of 1989. The dilemma is whether a popular revolution made the Communist dictator Ceausescu flee, or whether the people crowded the piazza only after he took off in his private helicopter. The opposing views of the two interviewees remain unresolved, as the voice-over of the narrator reminisces at last that he was a child at the time, and that the revolution was "silence to him." We realize that he is the young man who is filming the interview and who briefly appears in the end, self-reflexively, to try to inscribe himself into both the film and history. He confesses, though, his inability to write history, which seems to equate with the inability of the actual participants, Piscoci and Manescu, to have made history themselves.[20] Porumboiu's film interrogates the past in order to face a vacuum of identity that may well extend from Romania to the whole of Europe, where the West and the East are no longer poles of a safe and stable identification.

Ralph Dahrendorf of the London School of Economics—and one who defines himself as a "skeptical Europeanist"—claims that Europe, despite appearance to the contrary, has drifted progressively toward the West. What were once called Western, Eastern, and Central Europe have all been conflated together. The result is that it "is not the West [that] crumbled, but the East, or rather the Eastern part of Europe."[21] Dahrendorf equates Europe with the new European Union—as revealed in the use of "Europa" in the German title of his book; he thus holds the loss of the East responsible for the identity crisis Europe is undergoing. But by losing the East—or rather, by losing the Western construction of the East as the "other Europe"—the West also finds itself in a state of crisis because all places seem to have become the West.

That all places signify the West is poignantly illustrated by Jean-Luc Godard in his rich meditation on Europe, *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro* (*Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*, 1995).[22] The reference to Rossellini's *Germania anno zero* (*Germany Year Zero*, 1946) in the title equates the state of confusion and aimlessness of Germany after World War II with

that experienced after the formal reunification in 1990.[23] In the film, Eddie Constantine as Lemmy Caution, from Godard's previous *Alphaville*, wanders under the disguise of "the last spy" trying to "go back to the West." In a land labeled by an intertitle "Finis Germaniae,"[24] where the stones of the Berlin Wall are being sold to the tourists, the old man asks repeatedly and obsessively: "Which way is the West?" and "Comrades, l'Occident, s'il vous plait!" A Don Quixote–like figure who has to give up his identity—as his double, the old porter, has to give up his uniform in Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1935), another intertext in Godard's movie—Mr. Caution cannot find the West. We are only offered a quick shot of an ad—a signifier with no signified—with the caption TEST THE WEST; it shows a woman clad in leather, smoking a cigarette and bracketed by the silhouette of a man. A sneering indictment of Western consumerism and commodification à la Godard, the film stages the disquieting limbo Europe is suspended in because of what it labels "the decline of the West." Where Dahrendorf laments the progressive absorption of the East into the West, Godard highlights the fact that by losing the East, the West has also lost itself. In the end, the West and the East have both become unknowable and unrecognizable. Europe has therefore to abandon the old dualistic configuration to find a new basis for a collective identity.

The political, geographical and cultural forces at play that have demolished the Europe of 1945 have been matched with a new centripetal drive signified by the Treaty on the European Union (EU)—also originally known as the Maastricht Treaty[25]—signed by twelve member-states in February 1992.[26] The Twelve included the original Six signatories—France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg—which progressively expanded to include first Denmark, Ireland, and Great Britain,[27] and later Spain, Portugal and Greece.[28] The flag was twelve golden stars on a deep blue background, signifying an expandable circle of belonging, as demonstrated by the entrance of Austria, Finland, and Sweden in 1995; of ten countries, mostly from Central and Eastern Europe, in 2004: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, Malta, and Cyprus; and of Bulgaria and Romania in January 2007.[29] The agenda implied in the transformation of EEC into the EC, European Community, and finally the EU, European Union, was clear from the start: "The term 'European Economic Community' shall be replaced by the term 'European Community.'"[30] This indicates the intention to revert from a community bound by

economic ties to a larger "union." The new Treaty of 1992 historically grounds this modified supranationalism in "the ending of the division of the European continent,"[31] thus acknowledging the centrality of the "other Europe" in the revival and transformation of the European movement. It is no coincidence that the ex-USSR Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev was credited with being among the new visionaries of the renaissance of the Community, together with French president François Mitterrand, president of the European Commission Jacques Delors, and German chancellor Helmut Kohl. The open and warm support Gorbachev bestowed in 1986 on "one common European home" bears witness to the fact that the Communist leader was foreshadowing the "ending of the division of the European continent" and was ready to resume and expand the process of European integration to include finally the USSR, as had been originally intended in the aftermath of World War II[32] before the creation of the first European (read "Western European") Economic Community in 1957.[33] As early as 1986, Gorbachev's endorsement of Europeanism was proof of the renewed opportunity for a political integration of Europe under new historical circumstances.

One such unaccounted circumstance was the end of Western European colonialism. The completion of the decolonization process presented itself as the condition for Western Europe to become interested in a "European home." Such a historical shift is admitted to in the premise to the Maastricht Treaty, where the member states express the "desire to deepen *the solidarity between their peoples*"[34] (emphasis added), as opposed to "Europe's *solidarity to the overseas countries*" (emphasis added), as it had been stated in the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Western Europe could finally turn its look on Europe by means of its "repressed Other" after its gaze had been fixated for well over forty years on different Others—its remaining colonies, in the first place, but also on the Other constituted by the postwar presence of the United States.

THE MAKING OF EUROPE

In order to truly understand the Europe envisioned by the Maastricht Treaty, it is essential to consider the highly problematic relations between the old and new political organs of the European Community, the previously established European Commission and Council of Ministers on one side and the newly established European Parliament on the other.

They mirror the relations linking these organisms and the member states in that they restage and repropose in all its conflicting aspects the issue of supranationalism versus national governments in the making of contemporary Europe. As such, they enlighten the present condition of a supranational Europe and the workings of the European movement.

Of the three, the Commission is the primary supranational body; that is, the commissioners (are supposed to) operate in the interests of "Europe," not of the single countries from which they are taken. The Commission acts as the executive power and civil service of the Union. It is the most powerful, as well as the most criticized, institution: it is often accused of lack of transparency and democratic principles since the mechanisms behind its legislation are not open to public scrutiny and therefore not susceptible to criticism. At its side, the Council of Ministers seems to exist to counterbalance the Commission's supranational functions, because this body is the main representative of the national governments within the Community system; it consists of ministers from the single states who meet among themselves and vote on the laws and policies to be adopted by all members. But since the ministers vote by a "qualified majority"—which I will explain below—the individual power of the national governments is somehow defused by the Council, which also tries very hard to oversee the power of the Commission.

Last but not least, the new organ represented by the European Parliament is the most democratic of the Union's political institutions because it is elected directly by voters in each country. Unfortunately, it has been the weakest and most invisible body; it is therefore quite understandable why its best-known activity has been the repeated, but unheeded call on national governments to transfer more powers to it. In March 1999, however, the Parliament undertook an unprecedented action that seemed to open up new venues: under the presidency of French minister Jacques Santer, it decided and proceeded to use its power to dismiss for the first time ever the entire Commission on grounds of financial mismanagement. This stunning maneuver seemed to point favorably toward a rebalancing of power toward the weaker Parliament and away from the stronger Commission, bringing about a more substantial supranational framework.

This event goes straight to the heart of the matter, since in almost all fields of intervention of the Union, the recurring lament has been over the excessive power retained by the national governments, while supranationalism is still stuck in the mud. We shall see in detail that this

lamentation is echoed in the field of cinema. This state of things is hardly surprising, given the historical belief in and firm application of the principle of absolute sovereignty on the part of the European states. The stakes of the renewed European movement are exactly *how much* and *in what ways* sovereign power can be transacted and renegotiated in the interest of common larger goals, without the nationals feeling deprived of their rights, and with the Union not transcending but acting on their behalf. Such is the kernel of the European question.

To the three main pillars of the Union must be added two more bodies that carry an ever-increasing aura of Europeanism: they are the European Court of Justice and the new European Central Bank. The Court of Justice has been mostly invisible, but as a matter of fact it powerfully expresses and reinforces the Union by progressively administering a European law that overrides national laws, thus decreasing the sovereignty of the member states. At its side is the test study of the new supranationalism, the brand new European Central Bank; its Euro—the new single currency—started to freely circulate in 2002 in the eleven countries that first met the so-called criteria of convergence established at Maastricht: Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg, Austria, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Ireland.[35] The European Monetary Union, or EMU, has been conceived as a concrete embodiment of and metaphor for the new European Union; unlike the economic union designed to make use of institutions already in existence, it envisages the creation of new institutions in conjunction with the market, the single states, and the Community in the attempt to shape a truly European space. To the Euro-optimists, the EMU is an indicator that European integration is closer than ever; to the Euro-skeptics, it points to further disintegration.[36]

In terms of specific legal strategies adopted by the Union and national governments alike in order to shape a supranational Europe, the first important step can be considered to be the substitution of the Luxembourg compromise of 1966—where unanimity was required—with the principle of "qualified majority." This move basically reasserts that the member states would have to accept decisions they might not like. Its application entails a reduction of the power of the national governments in favor of supranational resolutions.[37] This marks a fundamental shift from what had been deemed the "intragovernmental strategies" of post–Luxembourg Compromise supranationalism—which still held on to mainly national procedures—to the deployment

of a full-fledged supranationalism. If this new policy has been understandably received with a grin—because it reduces the power of the national governments—the member states have welcomed instead the Commission's adoption of the principle of "subsidiarity": "This principle, borrowed from the practices of Catholic Canon Law, stated that the central organs of the Community should only be concerned with the most essential areas of policy, leaving everything else to 'subsidiary levels of government.'"[38] National governments have been quite happy that "everything else" fell under their sovereignty, as this would reaffirm their national powers.

Where the principle of subsidiarity seems ultimately to reinforce individual governments, another initiative has been adopted to counterbalance and somehow reduce an eventually too-high national control: the institution of "[T]he Committee of the Regions consisting of representatives of regional and local bodies."[39] Regionalism is intended here as referring "to areas both smaller and larger than a nation"; that is, in the dual way identified by Marsha Kinder with the terms "micro- and macroregionalism."[40] The term can indeed refer to the actual small regions that constitute larger nation-states—we may think of the German *Länder* or the quite decentralized *regioni* of Italy—as well as to much wider conglomerates comprising different countries held together by common interests. This second formation has gained momentum in the Union through the constitution of the so-called "Euroregions"; Italy, for example, proposed a "Pentagonale" of five states in the Adriatic area; Germany, Poland, and the Scandinavian countries are interested in creating a Baltic economic axis. Another hypothesis would concern a regional common market between Slovenia and Ukraine, while the Conference of the Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPRM) held in Finland in September 1999 tried to bring together and thus mobilize the disadvantaged coastal peripheries of Europe. The implementation of regional aid in the EU is dictated by the desire to promote the amelioration of less-developed or underdeveloped areas either contained within or overriding national borders. In the second case, the new practice overlooks established national borders in order to have the macro-regions profit from their participation in the enlarged initiative.

The boosting of regionalism, within or between member states, has brought about a substantial reconfiguration of the Community into a more supranational organ in which bodies either smaller or larger than the individual states are being not only subsidized but also recognized for

the first time. As a result, what was contended to be the legally unified nation-state is being decenterd and apparently weakened since it is no longer identified as the only authorized site of decision-making. Regionalism addresses the core of the dilemma that pits Europeanism against the national governments, a dilemma that was sharply and abruptly voiced by Margaret Thatcher in 1985 as fear of a "European superstate," by which was meant the EU as a stage ulterior to and deadly threatening that of the nation-state that has been the quintessential form of European self-determination since the fourteenth century.

To the contrary, the provisions contained in the Maastricht Treaty and the workings of the new EU point toward a different direction, one of agonistic co-existence of localisms, regionalisms, nation-states, and *supranationalism*. As I have discussed with specific reference to the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, a dualistic configuration of Europe no longer corresponds to the actual state of things; the nation-state is not opposed to Europeanism, the region is not opposed to the state, and the locality is not crushed by the center. Spain can offer an exemplary case in point: After Franco's death in 1975, the nation undertook a path of modernization by adhering to a supranational European Union. At the same time, a parliamentary democracy was installed, constituted of seventeen different communities that exerted quite a high level of de facto self-government—and with a nominal monarchy still in place. Also at the same time, the never-assimilated regions of Catalonia and Basque country have been progressively asserting and granted a higher level of autonomy. And finally, peripheral cities like Barcelona, Sevilla, and Bilbao, as centers of power and tourist destinations, are rising to a new international status that parallels that of the capital, Madrid.[41]

As these examples and my outline of the complex workings of the new EU show, the new configuration offered by the member states of the Union is one of the multiple fields of forces and the net of power practices that hold those states together in tension. The new Europe can best be explained by the arrangement of different operative levels—local, regional, national, supranational, and global—into a discourse where "one should not assume a massive and primal condition of domination, a binary structure with 'dominators' on one side and 'dominated' on the other, but rather a multiform production of relations of domination that are partially susceptible of integration into overall strategies."[42] As expressed in these terms, Foucault's theorization of power as decentralized, ubiquitous, and occupying all levels and spheres of social practice

perfectly substantiates the Europe redesigned at Maastricht. This Europe is coping with subnational, national and transnational identities (either previously existing, repressed, or of new formation), micro and macroregional blocs, and a supranational scheme, all *partially* susceptible of integration into the overall strategies of a globalized world, to pointedly stretch Foucault's words. My emphasis is on the word *partially* since it is precisely in this "partial" condition that we can find a possibility for affirmation.

Contemporary Europe is moving into a complex system of overlapping forces with no centralized control, a condition of decentralization and multiplicity acknowledged, for example, by Michael Emerson, ex-policymaker for the European Commission, who no longer subscribes to the notion "that great centers of power have to be concentrated at the level of a unified jurisdiction. The idea is rather that a set of rules and codes, defined and enforced at a variety of supra- and multinational levels, largely displace the need for superpowers."[43] In lieu of the antinomies, national-local, national-regional, and national-supranational, today's Europe is shaping itself into a *discursive* structure where local, regional, national, and supranational organs all exercise diversified forms of control in the proliferation of new discourses for the regulation of a common European space. Power relations intersect at multiple levels and form fields of force always contextual and mobile. Europe is shifting from a bipolar to a polycentric geopolitical configuration where overlapping sovereignties coexist and operate without being neutralized. It is in the context of cinema that these principles find a direct application and produce new configurations of Europe. Specifically, contemporary European coproductions—which will be explored in detail in the next chapter—translate modalities of multiplicity and coexistence as they account for diversified origins, assorted sources of funding, and plural identities for the coproduced films. At the same time, they provide narratives and images that retain cultural specificity and creative integrity while construing and representing a transnational, heterogeneous Europe.

Decline as Opportunity

The supranational Europe seems to realize the idea of "open society" forwarded—and outrageously dismissed at the time of its formulation—by Karl Popper in 1945.[44] The great Austrian thinker's attempt to undo from within the "closed" Western systems of totalitarianism, idealism,

dogmatism, dualism, and historicism, finds its exemplification in contemporary Europe, which is opening up to local, regional, national, and supranational sites of power, new and decentralized governments, as well as the unprecedented presence of diversified ethnic groups and religions, previously either repressed or oppressed by being kept confined in the colonies. The present fracturing of territories, governments, and institutions, as well as the multiplication and diversity of peoples, ethnicities, cultures, and religions, is undermining the Eurocentric construct of one Europe that is antithetical to everything that assumed to be Other. The popular idea of Europe, instead of perceiving the present condition as one opportunity, possibly realizing Popper's inspired anticipation of "the open society," views it as decline.

The idea is not new. The "decline of the West"—signifying the whole of Europe and European civilization—had already been lamented by Oswald Spengler at the end of the Great War. As early as 1918, in the morning of the much-awaited twentieth century, Spengler was pointing to the crisis of Eurocentrism that the First World War had blatantly exposed by proving that the bourgeois idea of a unitary Europe was unattainable. Such a crisis and a conflictual nostalgia toward those Eurocentric reassuring ideals are the disavowed grounds for lamenting the renovated collapse of Europe today. How, then, is it possible to redefine a European identity? European scholars David Morley and Kevin Robins ask the question and—together with Susan Sontag—seem to confirm the core of Europe as a lost center, only on a small scale: "This notion of a single Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals, has an obvious appeal. But what does it really amount to? . . . Perhaps Susan Sontag is right. Where one Europe symbolized empire and expansionism, the new idea of Europe is about retrenchment: 'the Europeanisation, not of the rest of the world, but . . . of Europe itself.'"[45]

Can Europe escape this logic of imperialism and colonialism and still not perish? Can its actual decline be transformed so that Europe can become European and no longer Eurocentric? What is deemed to be the decline or the "twilight" of Europe—appropriating while reinterpreting Nietzsche's famous *Twilight of the Idols*—can be turned from its apocalyptic overtones into a different affirmation, an opportunity for Europe to rearticulate its identity differently. The notion of a twilight of Europe as the possible precondition for repositioning and reasserting Europeanness, is best understood through a reconceptualization of Western thinking proposed by the philosopher Gianni Vattimo, who

refers to and reinterprets the thoughts of Martin Heidegger and Friedrich Nietzsche.[46]

Vattimo posits as paradigms of our age the "ontology of decline" and the "weak thought." He maintains that the "strong" thoughts of the West—the ideas of history, individualism, unity, progress, and finality, otherwise defined as the *grands récits* ("master narratives") by Jean François Lyotard—have been weakened in our time; that is, they have been reduced, defused, and diffused by the end, or rather the transformation, of European imperialism and the unprecedented growth of technology and mass media. Such a "weakening" is a positive occurrence, though, since it allows for the new multiple local, regional, national, and supranational entities to come into existence and constitute a different "heterotopic" universe. It is also the condition both responsible for and resulting from the globalization enacted through the "weak" software of the new digital technology and the "weakened" mobile and unencumbering capital of transnational corporations. Because of these factors the new society is no longer "transparent"—that is, based on the Enlightenment idea of absolute emancipation—but it has become "opaque" and is in a state of "relative chaos." These qualities of opaqueness and chaos refer to the coexistence, precisely the "contamination" (from the Latin *contaminatio* = next to), of plural voices, multiple worldviews, minoritarian discourses, and old and new cultures. In this chaos and in this decline, therefore, resides the only possible emancipation, because only these conditions allow for the emergence of different voices and *ex-centric* histories. It is precisely in the twilight[47] of Europe that the possibility to become truly European lies.

Such thinking may well inform contemporary Europe; the West, *Europa*, the land of the sunset, has the possibility of realizing itself at the very time of its own decline. Paradoxically, the twilight becomes the condition for a new identity. This does not mean that the so-called master narratives are disappearing; they persist and are instead realized in "declined" ways, through the introduction and acceptance of concepts of plurality, alterity, difference, opaqueness, and heterogeneity. Such a modality, which Vattimo defines as "weak ontology," can be better comprehended through the fundamental concept of *Verwindung*. This notion refers to a complex process that Vattimo tries to simplify at one point as a process of "repetition-maintenance-distortion."[48] When applied to today's Europe, *Verwindung* speaks of a condition in which the West acknowledges its past, its history, and its constructs at the same time that

it heals itself of that past and those constructs and takes responsibility by casting them in a different direction. The task contemporary Europe is faced with, then, is not to overcome the past, in the sense of having finally prevailed and thus leaving it behind, nor to want to recover it nostalgically. It is rather to accept it, deflecting its master narratives in order to accommodate the plurality and heterogeneity of the new local, national, supranational, and global discourses, where "new" has always to be considered a relative term in relation to the antecedent. The concept of *Verwindung* implies an overcoming of the past that is really a regrounding geared toward new and different realizations. At the time of its decline, Europe is in a condition to finally renounce being the center of the world and instead become open to the decenteredness, multiplicity, and heterogeneity of its differentiated local, regional, national, supranational, and transnational bodies and identities. The European Union and the other supranational organs established by the Maastricht Treaty constitute such a possibility, the attempt for Europe to realize its Europeanness by accommodating its past while rearticulating its identity on different grounds.

The specification of a European identity and its materialization into specific cultures is the central innovation of the Maastricht Treaty. Indeed, after acknowledging "the historical ending of the division of the continent" and expressing the desire "to deepen the solidarity between their peoples," as I previously mentioned, the treaty sets out "to reinforce the European identity "and "to assert its identity on the international scene."[49] Its opening resumes the first declaration of the Rome Treaty of 1957 with almost the same words: "The Treaty marks a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe." The ensuing statement, however, individualizes the undistinguished peoples of Europe: "The Union shall respect the national identities of its Member States, whose systems of government are founded on the principles of democracy."[50] Thus, not only does the new treaty recognize that European identity is de facto comprised of distinct identities, it reflects the primary desire for its members "to deepen the solidarity between their peoples *while respecting their history*, *their culture* and *their traditions*,"[51] (emphasis added) and thus contribute "to the flowering of *the cultures* of the Member States."[52] For the first time, the focus is on *identity*, *history*, and *culture*, as well as on the plurality and the distinctiveness that *cultures* and *traditions* imply. This was not a concern in the Rome Treaty of 1957. By 1992 the Western states had been wholly

reconstructed, while the ex-Soviet republics and previous satellites were being built or rebuilt as separate entities; both sides need to have their identities at one time preserved and promoted. As outlined in the Maastricht Treaty, the revived post–Cold War Europeanism furthers the notion that a common European identity be the catalyst around which to mobilize the separate countries of Europe. Above all, such new Europeanness entails the recognition and affirmation of its many identities and cultures. According to this renewed vision, culture in general, and cinema in our particular case, is called upon to promote the idea of Europe.

SUPRANATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE HETEROGENEOUS NATION-STATE

The "breakup" of Europe has resulted in the formation of an unprecedented number of nation-states throughout Central and Eastern Europe. This sheer fact seems to reinforce the value of the nation-state at the very moment that its demise is being pronounced. This configuration of a collective identity is one of the big narratives of the West today under attack, inside and outside Europe. On the one hand, the notion of the nation-state is taken to be a Eurocentric myth, which Jean François Lyotard deems to have deteriorated on the grounds that this form of legitimation depended on an idea of unity that has failed. On the other, in line with an anti-Eurocentric perspective, the concept has been equated with the idea of a colonialist enterprise, and as such it has to be dismissed, as Masao Myoshi expressly reveals: "In the very idea of the nation-state, the colonialists found a politicoeconomical as well as moral-mythical foundation on which to build their policy and apology."[53] Accordingly, Myoshi considers the nation-state as a mere Western colonial counterfeit that enabled and legitimized geographical expansionism, economic exploitation, and cultural othering in the once-called Third World. Lyotard and Myoshi consider the construct blameworthy, taking it to be merely a myth of totality and an embodiment of the West. The concept, however, still offers itself as the most valuable form of social configuration for post–Cold War Europe. After 1989, in fact, new nation-states have emerged in the "other Europe," while those of Western Europe have not ceased to exist, even if they have softened their policies to grant greater autonomy to regional or local bodies.

Germany's critical conscience, Jürgen Habermas, considers the model of the nation-state obsolete on different grounds, so he carefully investigates

the new dimension of globalization. The "pressures"[54] of globalization are de facto responsible for undermining the capacity of the national state to maintain its borders and regulate life within its territory. Transnational economic interests, international financial markets, recent information technology, and the mobility of capital, labor, and people override national borders and massively curtail the power of intervention of the state. Habermas reasons that the loss of political control can be compensated for *beyond* the nation-state at the international level, in what he calls a "postnational constellation";[55] he specifically envisions the European Union as one such form of international cooperation. The fact is that this configuration would neglect primary functions that the construct of the nation-state still retains, those of bestowing sovereignty and conferring identity, as is amply demonstrated in the specific case of the "other Europe." National allegiance has indeed provided new and old states of Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe with an identity they never had, or of which they had been deprived under totalitarian rule, whose goal was to erase a sense of distinctive belonging in favor of a universal commonality that was never common. The narrative of legitimation of the nation-state has permitted the formation of political associations, the establishment of rights, representativeness, and visibility on an international stage. This is especially the case in the context of the European Union. Only as self-determined nations can countries become agents in a supranational enterprise. The European project requires indeed that individual states identify and represent themselves in a supranational conclave. Ultimately, the supranational is mobilized by the national, rather than being a threat to it, and the nation-state poses therefore as the condition for, not the obstacle to, the assertion of Europeanism. Habermas' vision of a "universalist democracy" does not correspond to a Europe steeped in a supranational, rather than postnational, framework. When he upholds the challenge of transforming a "Europe of nation-states" into a "Europe of citizens," he fails to see that, in post–Cold War Europe, the national state still provides the conditions according to which old and new European countries may come to a first close encounter.

The validity of the model of the nation-state does not exempt it from being subjected to pungent criticism and a necessary reformulation: the idea of the modern, homogeneous nation-state that Lyotard and Myoshi conceive of and attack, and that Habermas transforms into a universal democracy, is what is at stake in contemporary Europe. The concept of

the nation-state has rather to be understood in terms of what Ralph Dahrendorf calls the "heterogeneous nation-state."[56] Dahrendorf contends that the nation-state is predicated not on an equation but rather on a tension between the nation and the state. The danger is represented by the homogeneous nation-state, whose clear exemplification he deems to be the ethnic state in former Yugoslavia and which, he asserts, rests on the excessive emotional investment represented by the nation to the detriment of the state. This nationalism has to be condemned because the homogeneous nation-state is constantly tempted to aggress against neighbors and minorities; the heterogeneous nation-state, instead, acknowledges different nations under one system and is devoted to granting and protecting equal rights, especially in the case of people who are not equal. Dahrendorf concedes that the EU has failed so far to protect civil rights and democracy, but he asserts that only the heterogeneous national state has the capacity to coalesce the increasing and culturally differentiated nations under the tutelage of one legal bureaucratic system.

Darhendorf's observations resonate with the provisions designated by the European Union in that the Maastricht Treaty actually forwards a concept of citizenship that seeks to render the Union the enforcer and guarantor of a European allegiance out of a heterogeneous community of states: "Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union"; "Every Citizen of the Union shall have the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States";[57] and finally, "Such freedom of movement shall entail the abolition of any discrimination based on nationality between workers of the Member States as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment."[58] The notion of a collective citizenship is a brand-new concept in Europe; it marks a significant departure from the traditional link between nationality and citizenship in the nation-state.[59] It points to a weakening of the metaphysical ties between persons and State and suggests an idea of cosmopolitization that is absent in the traditional construct of citizenship but could accommodate the multiple molecular movements of people in contemporary Europe.

A European consciousness is not incompatible with, nor does is supersede a national belonging. In speculating about the emerging Europe, Anthony D. Smith has advanced this hypothesis: "We might see the addition of a new circle of European allegiance and aspiration in a polycentric world of regional associations and power blocs. . . . There is nothing to prevent individuals from identifying with Flanders, Belgium and

Europe simultaneously, and displaying each allegiance in the appropriate context . . . in concentric circles of loyalty and belonging."[60]

To be European would mean to add a circle of belonging, without erasing any of the already existing loyalties; a growing cosmopolitanism does not require the dissolution of one's nationality. Historian Tony Judt reinforces the idea of a supranational Europe in which nations and states have not vanished when he observes, "The European Union in 2005 had not superseded conventional territorial units and would not be doing so in the foreseeable future. . . . What was new, and thus rather harder for outside observers to catch, was the possibility of being French *and* European, or Catalan *and* European—or Arab *and* European."[61] An expandable form of allegiance constitutes an authentic opportunity for Europe; the route to a truly European community may well be the inclusion and the willful acceptance of a supranational identification alongside other belongings and sentiments.

If the prospect of European citizenship may grant a further form of association, the notion of collective citizenship does not do away with the need for Europe to be a sentiment of the heart. Europe cannot be only a product of the brain or an abstraction imposed from an elite in Brussels, as the common lamentation goes. Anthony D. Smith has best captured the dilemma by asserting, "However incisive the leadership and secure the institutions, they will not avail to forge any genuine European unity at the popular level unless and until there has been a commensurate evolution of popular perceptions, sentiments and attitudes away from the nation and the national state towards an overarching European identity."[62]

It is not that sentiment has to strive away from the national state, as Smith argues, as much as it has to instead develop at the supranational level to bind together the current twenty-seven member-states that comprise the European Union. Freud himself recognized that we have to invest some degree of libido in civilization, no matter how excruciating our discontent might be: "These collections of men are to be libidinally bound to one another. Necessity alone, the advantages of work in common, will not hold them together."[63] These words echo the conflictual relationship between the EU and its members and point to the necessity of some kind of attachment. This would rest on the common values, symbols, myths, memories, and shared history and traditions that bind peoples together and confer on them a specific and special significance. While such a libidinal investment was realized within the nation-state,

the question is precisely how possible it is to form an emotional bond at the level of an overarching European identity.

A potential identification with Europe raises a most pressing issue for the European project: what values, myths, and symbols could arouse a feeling of Europeanness? Such bonds have been traced to a common European cultural heritage—that of Roman law, Judeo-Christian ethics, Renaissance humanism, Enlightenment, rationalism, and the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. If this common legacy is invoked to create sentiments of affinity and unity among the peoples of Europe, the issue becomes problematic if we consider the divisions, internecine wars and strife that have splintered the continent. Jürgen Habermas speaks significantly of the differences that have marked European history: "Since the end of the Middle Ages, developments in Europe have been more strongly marked by divisions, differences, and tensions than in any other culture—by the rivalry between secular and ecclesiastical powers, the regional fragmentation of political rule, the contradictions between town and country, the schisms of religious confessions and the deep conflict between faith and knowledge, the competition of the great powers, the imperial relation between 'motherland' and colonies, and above all ambition and war between nations."[64]

The words find a resonance in the present configuration of Europe, which includes often-conflicting entities, old Western and Northern states, ex-Soviet Central Eastern countries, new Southern islands, and regional formations, as well as an unprecedented number of migrants, ex-colonized, exiles, political refugees, and asylum seekers, all kept together in a state of tension. These differences may well constitute the "common historical horizon"[65] out of which to imagine and construct a new "Europe." Identification with "Europe" would not be as much about a common past as about the shaping of a common future, however elusive and frail this might appear. Common laws and mass communications are pivotal instruments in the accomplishment of the task. The European Union is providing the institutional and legal framework. It is left to the media, and in particular to the cinema, to construct and disseminate myths and symbols for a supranational European imaginary.

CHAPTER 2

The Return of the Repressed

European Cinema and the New Coproductions

SINCE THE EARLY 1990S, EUROPEAN COPRODUCTIONS HAVE RECONFIGURED several of the economic, technological, and historical changes that occurred in the wake of the Cold War: specifically, the globalized market and the revival of Europeanism as formalized by the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. If these historical phenomena have prompted the reappraisal and transformation of such practices, they have allowed envisioning Europe in new ways. As agreements of cooperation among multiple partners, post-1989 coproductions present and replicate issues pertaining to the constitution of a supranational enterprise; as such they throw new light on a supranational Europe and move to redefine and reconfigure Europe differently. As specifically articulated texts, coproduced films offer the starting point for an inquiry into the existence of a "European" cinema.[1]

The notion of European cinema per se is actually an import from outside of Europe. As a category in the curricula in American universities, it comprises and levels diversified national cinemas, industry practices, and aesthetic conventions into one syncretic appellation. The term has been variously employed to indicate separate movements across time, "major" directors or auteurs, and a canon of supposedly "great" works. It has often been identified with an elitist and denationalized idea of "art cinema." Catherine Fowler is one of several scholars who has recently drawn attention to the role critics have played in constructing such categories,

pointing out that "outside of the critical field there is no 'European cinema.'"[2] The term has mostly been used to designate different national cinemas in Europe. The critical discourse and this sensibility underscore the lack of awareness of a European cinema as a site of representation and identification for Europeans. Such a possibility may appear inconceivable in an ever-elusive Europe, but that is precisely what the supranational framework of the EU, the new pan-European cultural policies, coproduction practices, and transnational narratives have sought to offer to post–Cold War Europeans. Coproduced films may provide images of a new—meaning post-1989—Europe with which Europeans might identify, even if it is not at all clear just who is European and what being European might imply in the new cartography. In particular, two important coproductions from the 1990s, *Land and Freedom* (1995, Ken Loach, UK/Spain/Germany/Italy) and *No Man's Land* (2001, Danis Tanović, Bosnia-Herzegovina/Slovenia/Belgium/France/UK), will provide insight into the possible existence of a "European" cinema.

The mere prospect of envisioning such European cinema raises the specter of its danger: the annihilation of cherished identities. In discussing this issue, Chantal Akerman has voiced concern about the emergence of "a monolithic European cinema, as this would rob people of the ability to make strategic connections between things that are of value across boundaries and territories and would leave us without some idea of what a possible site of memory could be."[3] Akerman's identification of a "monolithic European cinema" cuts to the core of the matter: the threat to the existence of national cinema. Indeed, the new cinematographic coproductions force us to confront twin issues: the emergence of a cinema available to a supranational Europe (no matter how elusive and divided such a Europe may be) and the problematization of the concept of national cinema as a stronghold of national identity. At its most basic level, a coproduction implies the reliance, or dependence, of a film on multiple origins and multiple sources of funding: in and of itself, this poses a threat to the alleged unity of the work.

It is no wonder that film historians have been virtually unanimous in their perception of coproductions as detrimental to the idea and existence of national cinema. In speaking about the international coproductions that peaked during the 1960s, Mira Liehm laments that those films "lost some of their nationalistic features."[4] Likewise, Susan Hayward has deplored and condemned the growing phenomenon of coproductions in the new Europe of the 1990s: "It is in the murky area of co-productions,

especially when they are the predominant production practice, that the identity of a national cinema becomes confused."[5]

In spite of the negative critical judgment of film historians, it is precisely the "murky area of coproductions" that is shaping or reshaping contemporary European cinema, and appropriately so. This progressively dominant practice recasts the dilemma between a supranational framework and national and local demands, and it proves that ultimately such is not an antinomy. Rather, the principles and workings of coproduced films stand in firm opposition between what are perceived to be the cannibalizing coproductions of multiple and chaotic origins on one side and resistant national products on the other. Instead, they produce or reproduce a more complex interface of supranational, national, and local relations, which is precisely what is at work in post–Cold War Europe. Such strategies of cooperation can actually articulate and elucidate the project of a new Europeanism undertaken by the European Union (EU). In replicating this framework, they effectively show how a film can attain and retain its specificity and integrity in spite of—or rather, because of—the intervention of multiple financial sources and correlated restrictions. Ultimately, coproductions destabilize the too-facile opposition of the supranational versus the national and local. They demonstrate how the national and the local are in fact mobilized by the supranational. If contemporary coproductions can illuminate and actualize the credo of "unity in diversity" heralded by the European Union in its official policies, they are also a catalyst in unmasking the dangers and contradictions present in the new Europeanism. They unravel a specifically new reality—or perhaps a renewed, yet altered, reality as they offer fields of engagement for the European project and the opportunity to assess new forms of identification with Europe.

Post-World War Two Coproductions

In the aftermath of World War II, the first treaties to institute cooperation in the production of films were stipulated between France and Italy in 1946 and again in 1949. This reflected an effort by both countries to rely on existing cinema infrastructures and a strong tradition of state support in order to pave the way for transnational forms of cooperation. The landmark bilateral treaty of 1949 established the dual nationality for the films and reveals the economic rationale behind the practice: "Lengthy films made in coproduction and admitted to benefits of the present

accord are considered national films by the authorities of the two countries. They accrue full rights and benefits by virtue of laws in effect or laws which could be passed in each country."[6]

The fundamental advantages of the coproduced film lay, and still lie, in access to subsidies, tax breaks, and quota exemptions from each participating country. For all intents and purposes, then, a coproduced film was considered a national film, and as such, it would enjoy identical prerogatives in both countries. These privileges were first secured by implementing what can be called a proportional system: the financial input of each country would correspond to the creative and technical participation in each film. Most importantly, pooling resources would eventually generate a pooling of the markets; a larger audience and larger revenues were the ultimate target.

The phenomenon grew stronger after the Treaty of Rome instituted the EEC in 1957. The unified market community consisting of the six founding members was able to offer a potentially enlarged space for the circulation of coproduced films. Still the fact remained that even with a film's freshly acquired status of multiple nationalities, there was no hint of an overarching "European" appellation. This absence effectively undermined any actual European dimension and managed instead to affirm or reaffirm a national urge. Indeed, the first bilateral, and later multilateral, treaties functioned very much like the recently implemented strategies of the Common Market advanced in the Treaty of Rome. They reflected primarily intergovernmental policies that did not translate into a supranational dimension but operated rather as the autonomous acts of national governments that had formed a privileged and circumscribed sphere of action.[7] The historic-economic context sheds light on the reasons for the implementation and success of the postwar coproductions.

During this period, European economies were marked not only by conditions of disarray and insufficiency but also by the fresh and massive presence of the United States. The latter established itself as a hegemonic force through the Marshall Plan, whose particular program of reconstruction translated into U.S. loans, as well as the selling of American goods to the European countries. The United States was interested in establishing its influence in creating ever-new markets. They considered films as commodities, and part of their strategies of reconstruction included flooding European screens with stockpiles of American cinematic imports as a way to buttress their own markets.[8]

Specifically, the United States feared the reorganization of the national film industries in Europe along the lines of the nationalistic ideologies that had led to the war. It also feard the protectionist policies set up by the European states, which ran counter to the American credo of a free-market economy. This is aptly illustrated by the declaration of the chairman of the Allied Film Board in Rome in 1944, Admiral Stone, who shamelessly stated that Italy, as a rural and previously Fascist country, had no need, nor right to a film industry.[9] The suspicion of nationalism, the dread of state protectionism, and the *prise du pouvoir* of the American hegemony would dictate the course of history, and, in this case, the specific film policies of Italy for over forty years.[10] Thus individual European states like Italy and France were left to their own devices in terms of resurrecting their cinema industries; they proceeded to do so by a concerted set of heavy government subsidies and protectionist strategies. Given the scarcity of financial resources, coproductions offered one important means by which to achieve the goal, to the point that without transnational state support there was no guarantee of ultimate market success.[11]

In short, the original plans for cooperation between France and Italy, and later among other partners, were a response to the economic need to rebuild the national film industries, and they acted as a defensive strategy against Hollywood imports.

Coproductions reached their peak in 1964; 126 out of 294 films produced in Italy that year were coproduced with France; others were produced with Spain, West Germany, Yugoslavia, and Argentina. Between 1949 and 1964 their total number was 1,091, and this included both popular genre and art films. The unparalleled success of these coproductions eventually provoked both the generalized and unscrutinized complaint of loss of nationality discussed above.

Hollywood was also indicted as a monster that devoured European film industries. In fact, in 1968 Jean-Claude Batz argued both points in one of the few studies concerned with forging a European dimension in cinema.[12] Specifically, Batz called for the creation of a communal European organ to fend off the increasing and overwhelming American intervention in the European film industries—a phenomenon that he wholly condemned: "The dominant position acquired by the cartel of large American enterprises in Europe joined with the MPEA,[13] breaks down the sectors of European cinematography, dismantles its structures and atrophies its enterprises."[14]

If Batz examined the situation primarily in economic terms and insisted on the need for an *aide communautaire* to be installed and managed under the auspices of the Common Market in order to preserve the "national contributions," his comments also resonated with the raw idea of what constituted a "European cinema" at the time. In 1941, still in the middle of the world conflict,[15] several Europeanists had conceived and formulated this objective, as they felt the urge for both a unified market and a unified audience. But despite the numerous attempts of people like producers Riccardo Gualino and Henri Frenay, Claude Degand of Centre Nationale de la Cinématographie (CNC), Eitel Monaco, and Enrico Giannelli[16] of Associazione nazionale industrie cinematografiche e affini (Anica) to support this call to action, this strand of Europeanism remained mostly silent, not least because it was used to contain and overcome nationalistic pulls. References to "national cultures" and a broader "civilization" conceal how the creation of "films of international quality" was actually employed to obscure nationalistic urges of the parties involved, as in the French-Italian Agreement of 1966: "The union of effort and means of the Italian and French film industries, by trade and coproduction will continue to contribute effectively to the expansion of the national cultures and the civilization to which the two countries are related, and will favor their economic expansion."[17]

These words echo the intent of the aforementioned 1949 coproduction treaty: "to favor the expansion of French film and of Italian film in the world." Not only do they make no attempt to promote a European consciousness, they also reveal how any notion of *national* must be interpreted in terms of nationalistic measures, whose ultimate goal is economic in nature and international in scope; that is, to favor the parties' "economic expansion."

The Question of National Cinema

The decision by the recovering film industries to pool their funds, along with American financial contributions, is one of several elements that challenge the assumption that national cinema acts as a homogeneous construct capable of envisioning a unified national self. Rossellini's *Paisan* is a major accomplishment of neorealism, and it is fair to say that the movement has been regarded as one of the most successful examples of national cinema in that it was able to project a new identity for Italy,

one that was away from its Fascist past, and firmly grounded into the common experiences of the resistance and the liberation. As such, it proves a pertinent case to test and contest the different ways in which the concept of national cinema has been employed. To borrow the framework suggested by Andrew Higson, cinema is classified as national according to the producing industry, a distinctive aesthetics and culturally specific imaginary of the nation, the places of circulation and consumption, and the critical discourse around the film.[18]

In the economic terms of the first category, *Paisan*—and *Bicycle Thieves* as well—turns out not to be the sole product of a domestic film industry since it was partially funded with American money; it is thus questionable whether this belongs fully in the classification national. Seen through the lens of a "text-based approach," the film does share in a new common style, the neorealist aesthetics,[19] and tries to project a national self and a common worldview, which were substantiated by unique historical circumstances. It should be pointed out, however, that while the film draws the geographical and ideological map of a new Italy, from Sicily to the Apennines, through a major participation of the dispossessed, it does so with the intervention of "other" nationalities, American, African American, and British; it also hosts languages other than Italian, like British and American English, not to mention Italian dialects. These other presences challenge the "imaginary coherence" and "unique identity" (in Higson's words) that should be projected, and pose the question of what kind of nation is actually being configured.

In terms of Higson's "consumption-based or exhibition-led approach,"[20] as confined to the national territory, neorealist films were not very popular in Italy: they represented only 10 percent of the films viewed by domestic audiences; a case apart was *Roma, città aperta* (1945), which quickly became number one at the box office.[21] Such a limited consumption casts doubt on the power of these films as venues for people's identification with "one" national cinema. Lastly, according to "a criticism-led approach," the tendency of critics and film historians to conflate Italian national cinema with the art cinema of neorealism in the 1950s, has erased the voice of other popular desires and fantasies, expressed for example in the melodramas of Raffaello Matarazzo—his *Catene (Chains)* was one of the greatest box office successes of 1951–52—and the comedic series of *Peppone and Don Camillo*: the first in this Franco-Italian series directed by the Frenchman Julien Duvivier was the most popular Italian film of the 1951–52 season.

Furthermore, and above all, we need to consider a dimension that until recently has been neglected in film histories precisely because it does not focus solely on the production of films and their domestic consumption, namely, a film's international reception, which accounts for a perspective that both redefines and expands the ways in which the concept of national cinema has been used. In a way not entirely unlike what would occur nearly twenty years later and in another context with the New German Cinema,[22] neorealist films acquired their critical reputation and legitimacy to represent the Italian nation in an international context. In France, André Bazin hailed the new directors as "the Italian School of Liberation," and for all intents and purposes he was considered one of the "fathers" of the movement; Indian director Satyajit Ray was reportedly inspired by neorealist films in making his "Apu" trilogy (1955–59), while in the United States *Roma, città aperta*—the 1945 breakthrough of neorealism—triumphed at the box office: it had been sold for "a ridiculously small sum, somewhere between $3,000 and $8,000, according to various sources, but grossed between $1 million to $3 million."[23] In addition to their economic success in the United States, *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) and *Shoeshine* (1947) by Vittorio De Sica garnered special Academy Awards. As a result of these awards, the Best Foreign Film category was instituted, and in its wake came the rehabilitation of Italy, not to mention the popular American approval for their government's intervention in the war, as the rubble and rags of Italy were filling American screens.

Various elements here disrupt the fiction of a national cinema as self-contained and instead draw attention to factors disregarded by previous film scholarship in the attempt to fathom a unified national imaginary. A quintessential embodiment of national cinema such as Italian Neorealism shows how the concept must take into account otherness in all its facets as constitutive, and not as either exceptional or supplemental phenomena that are often erased and confined to footnotes. The national is not a unified fiction; it is a fiction, but one that incorporates otherness at the very moment that it is presumed to be homogeneous for ideological, critical, and marketing reasons.

This does not mean that the concept should be discarded; rather, the notion is viable precisely because it mobilizes different elements and becomes a site of negotiation, and representation, of those elements in ways specific to a particular culture. A culture is particular not because of stable indigenous traits but because of the specific strategies according to which it works or reworks its history or histories; it invokes its cultural

and cinematic past, it inscribes or reinscribes other traditions, it includes or excludes other nationalities, and it is willing to question and disrupt the coincidence of its geographical and imaginary borders. The concept of national cinema is especially relevant to contemporary discussions about its meaning and utilization in the context of a post-1989 Europe as new transnational forces and supranational bodies are altering the borders of the nation-states. Such new forces—and coproductions are among them—function today both as a catalyst to reconfigure the concept and as the introduction of an alterity responsible for expanding it. As such, in many ways they could be construed as examples of *weakened* national cinema, where "weakened," according to Gianni Vattimo, indicates that the construct has to accommodate previously unaccounted-for, as well as new, factors.[24] These include funding, personnel, cast, and textual sources not originating in the same country, as well as aesthetics and narrative conventions from elsewhere, without these elements distorting or perverting an allegedly "purist" national cinema; the concept is, then, affirmative and not demeaning. Such would be the case of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's New German Cinema, which reinscribes the Hollywood melodrama—already mediated by the German émigré Douglas Sirk, né Detlef Sierck—as well as the Hollywood and neorealist conventions in the Spanish cinema of the 1950s.[25] These examples attest to a syncretic culture and highlight the phenomenon of appropriation and reworking that is at work in contemporary cinema, not only European. The practice does not eliminate a national specificity but comes to constitute that very specificity by articulating different contributions, economic and cultural, in ways that are culturally and historically situated in a particular place.

More than one nation can exist and has to be recognized within the geographical boundaries of a nation-state. Such nations or "imagined communities" can be a relatively recent diasporic community like the Turkish immigrants in Germany.[26] It can also apply to a more structured and visible body politic like the Catalonians in Spain. Catalan cinema in Spain, and Black, Welsh, and Scottish cinema in Britain, need to be accounted for as part of Spanish and British cinema, respectively. They should not pose a threat to, but rather be viewed as constitutive of, national cinemas, which should in turn be predicated on heterogeneity and not repressive homogeneity. As John Hill aptly suggests, we should conceive of multiple nations within a state, and therefore sustain a national cinema capable of expressing multiple identities, and eventually addressing multiple nations within a particular place.[27]

Film scholar Philip Schlesinger has perhaps best captured the dilemma of national cinema in terms of the *state*; he clarifies how the underlying issue is "a desire to see the interior of the national space as more complex and diverse, while at the same time wishing to sustain the idea that there is still some retaining boundary wall, if not of nationhood, then at least of statehood."[28] The wish to preserve statehood does not imply that nationhood cannot expand to accommodate more than one nation. He argues instead that the decoupling of the nation from the state would lead to "the end of national cinemas" and to further fragmentation and loss.[29] It is rather a matter of adding than dividing, of considering the heterogeneity supplemented by other nations, other sources of funding and artistic input, and other audiences—domestic and international, popular and critical—in order to account for a *weakened* national cinema and not a "postnational" cinema.

The question is central to the attempt to construe a European cinema. In an article revealingly titled "The Nation Vanishes: European Coproductions and Popular Genre Formula in the 1950s and 1960s,"[30] Tim Bergfelder has attempted to ground the existence of a European cinema on the disappearance of national film cultures. While Bergfelder maintains that a long tradition of transnational connections—both in terms of coproductions and generic formulas—has created a European cinema because they elide national specificities and share common popular genres, I suggest that it is precisely the nationally and locally specific traits that are responsible for the makeup and success of European cinema. Coproductions do not create a European cinema because they eliminate borders and employ identical narrative formulas. They contribute rather to the proliferation of European cinema if they preserve and acknowledge the marked differences of "national," regional, or local cinemas in Europe. Most coproductions of the 1950s and 1960s are nationally specific while involving multinational financing and talent. Coproduced films like *Senso* (1954) and *Il gattopardo* (*The Leopard*, 1963) by Luchino Visconti articulated indeed the historical failures of the *Risorgimento*, an issue profoundly specific to the Italian nation, while employing financial and artistic input from France and the United States.

Post-1945 Coproductions and International Cinema

It is relevant to notice that films like *Senso* and *The Leopard* are largely the same films that rose to the status of international films in the 1950s and

1960s. The notion of "international" is central to the construct of national cinema, as the two are bound by one common "unifying" denominator. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith has encapsulated the notion of *international cinema* as a development of the art film into a big-budget production for an international market;[31] these criteria would qualify major 1950s and 1960s coproductions as the most successful international films ever. Several titles come to mind: *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (*Rocco and His Brothers* 1960) by Visconti, *Le carrosse d'or* (*The Golden Coach*, 1952) by Jean Renoir, *L'année dernière à Marienbad* (*Last Year at Marienbad*, 1961) by Alain Resnais, *La dolce vita* (1960) by Federico Fellini, *L'avventura* (1959), *La notte* (1960) and *L'eclisse* (1962) by Michelangelo Antonioni, *Le mépris* (*Contempt*, 1963) by Jean-Luc Godard, *La battaglia di Algeri* (*The Battle of Algiers*, 1965) by Gillo Pontecorvo, and *Il conformista* and later *Ultimo Tango a Parigi* (*The Conformist*, 1971; and *Last Tango in Paris*, 1973) by Bernardo Bertolucci.

These coproduced films are the same ones that have been taken to signify distinctive national cinemas. The fact shows how coproductions have been neglected, or outright repressed, by film historiography in the constitution of the category of national cinema precisely because of their potential to undermine national identities. I have tried to show how the mixture of multiple financing and artistic and technical talent has been blamed for producing the aforementioned "murky area" responsible for undermining the fiction of a unitary national cinema.[32] Coproductions have been discarded on such grounds. In the case of post-World War II European coproductions, not only did they draw attention to a threatening multiplicity, but they also exposed their vulnerability to being subsumed into the category of international cinema, thus further undermining a sense of national belonging. The recurring objectives of the early treaties between Italy and France, and later West Germany, Spain, and to a lesser extent other countries, lay in fact in the output of films of "quality" and of "international character." The aforementioned 1949 treaty between Italy and France explains the goal of the dual collaboration: "to facilitate by all means of coproduction agreements the realization of *films de qualité* that generally require larger costs in order to make films that acquire a value such that they are able to spread [*l'expansion*] French and Italian films throughout the world."[33]

The revised treaty between Germany and France in 1955 in preparation for new multilateral agreements further clarifies the matter: "the authorities of both countries are favorably inclined towards making, in

coproduction, films of international stature [*films de qualité internationale*] among themselves and those countries with which one or the other is respectively joined by coproduction agreements."[34]

The 1967 treaty between Italy and the United Kingdom reiterates such advantages of coproductions on the ground that they are "films of such *high quality*, that they would increase *the prestige of the film industries* [emphasis added] of the two Countries."[35]

Two central and seemingly opposed directives can be discerned here, one pointing to the creation of films with larger budgets for a larger, international market, the other reaffirming the will to preserve and propagate the specific national cultures. It follows that internationalism was the driving force behind the early coproductions. It met the need of accessing new markets, and of acquiring or reacquiring a sort of legitimacy through the so-called films of quality, whose goal was ultimately to foster a national reaffirmation and the national prestige into a post-war international arena. The tacit assumption was that "international" truly signified "American," not only when the United States was an actual partner, but also when only European countries were involved; this was the case with Antonioni's films, *La notte* (1960), *L'avventura* (1959), *L'eclisse* (1962), and later *Blow-up* (1966). The category of international film was thus defined by its intended audience or market, which, during this period, was mostly represented by the United States. In this regard, the first wave of European coproductions, from the 1950s through the 1970s, constitutes and colludes with international cinema, regardless of whether they were financed, supported or backed by U.S. interests. Internationalism of this sort prompted one of the great producers of all times, Dino De Laurentis, to build Dinocittà in the outskirts of Rome in 1962, and at the same time Cinecittà was rebaptized as "Hollywood on Tiber": large film studios created to attract foreign capital, namely American producers, and devoted to a transnational output.

De Laurentis understood the larger European and international dimension of films precisely in terms of bigger budget, high production values, use of stars, and appeal to a foreign market, where "foreign" has to be understood as mainly the American market. In 1963 he declared that he "wanted to make movies ready for the European Common Market and international movies in English."[36] He viewed "European" as an economic space and synonymous with international, intended as a global, mainly American, market. Such internationalism is the common denominator of the extraordinary films that he produced, beginning with *Riso*

amaro (*Bitter Rice*, 1949) by Giuseppe De Santis and *La strada* (1954) by Federico Fellini, continuing with *The Bible* (1966) by John Huston, and ending with *Serpico* (1973) by Sidney Lumet and *Conan the Barbarian* (1982) by John Milius, the last two shot in the studios he established in 1972 in the Unites States.

The paradox was that this sort of internationalism operated alongside the seemingly opposing efforts of the European states to enforce strict protectionist measures. Ironically, nationalism actually promoted an international cinema and encouraged Hollywood to partner with European productions. Because the imports and proceeds of American movies were subject to all sorts of taxes and quota restrictions, Hollywood devised alternate strategies to overcome these obstacles. Given that films coproduced with Hollywood, even as a minority party, could access national subsidies and economic benefits granted to similarly financed European films, producers opted for direct investment—instead of loans—of American capital *in loco*. The result was that, while continuing to fight American companies, European film industries were more than eager for the American revenues to be reinvested in Europe. This would boost labor, facilities, and talent for local industries; most importantly, it would allow for distribution rights throughout Europe and abroad for the American studios. In a perverse way, state protectionism and the supportive schemes set up by the individual states to sustain their national industries not only benefited the American companies but also produced an international, at the expense of a European, cinema.[37]

Actually, this international cinema rested de facto on films that were nationally oriented: *La dolce vita* by Fellini and *La notte* by Antonioni exemplify these tendencies. These films illustrate their dual nature, and perception. *La dolce vita* functions as the quintessential international movie because of its scope, budget, cast, stars, and crew; it also takes its due place within Italian national cinema because of the specific ways it tackles the modernization of the country—and the textual American component is an intrinsic historical, economic, and cultural part of the modernizing process of Italy. We should then unravel the different citizenships a film is given, "its different circles of belonging,"[38] according to the usages for which films are employed; we should help sustain them rather than reducing them to one category that would, by extension, suppress the others. A coproduced film may belong to a national cinema, but it also functions as an international product. One definition, and one

identity, does not exclude the others; it all depends on the position from where we speak.

Positions are manifold. In contemporary historiography, for instance, Peter Krämer has tried to deinternationalize (and indirectly de-Americanize) films coproduced with Hollywood with his claim that *Roman Holiday*, shot in Rome in 1953 by William Wyler, should be considered "European" because the film was "made in Europe, made for Europe"[39] and specifically constructs a European identity that is intended for Western audiences. This position is at sharp odds with trans-Atlantic scholarship. Peter Lev has argued that *Roman Holiday* could be construed as part of "Euro-American cinema," a term he first coined,[40] which specifically refers to films from Europe coproduced with the United States after World War II.

In discussing the impasse of assigning an identity to European films, Peter Lev explains this "fascinating hybrid": "The 'Euro-American art film' [is] a synthesis of the American entertainment film (large budget, good production values, internationally known stars) and the European art film (auteur director, artistic subject and/or style) with the aim of reaching a much larger audience than the art film normally commands."[41]

Lev invokes a Gramscian perspective of cross-cultural influence to counter the dualistic opposition that rests on the American cultural hegemony that threatens European national film industries; he attempts to level the disproportion of power by asserting how the European films of the 1950s and 1960s have influenced the usually dominant American industry. In so doing, he seeks to disengage European art films from a subaltern position; rather, they constitute a third category, that of "between-cultures films," which are neither European nor American: *Paisan*, *Voyage to Italy*, and *Stromboli* by Roberto Rossellini; *Contempt* by Jean-Luc Godard; *Blow-up*, *The Passenger*, and *Zabriskie Point* by Michelangelo Antonioni; *Fahrenheit 451* by François Truffaut; *1900*, *Last Tango in Paris*, and *The Last Emperor* by Bernardo Bertolucci; *The American Friend* and *Paris, Texas* by Wim Wenders; and *Bagdad Café* by Percy Adlon.

Contrary to its egalitarian impulse, such a position reinforces a universalized, essentialist dualism between "American," signifying economic means and mass entertainment, and "European," standing for art and elitism/hermetism; it conflates European cinema with art cinema; above all it produces a third category that effaces national specificities, and rewrites what has been conceived as international European cinema as a

"Euro-American" artifact, thus crediting—and officially legitimizing—Hollywood through European tributary culture, even if "Euro" is the first term of the new hybrid. If this maneuver brings into the open the usage of "international" for "American"—a displacement only hinted at in the bilateral treaties mentioned above—it does elide the existence of national cinemas. *Cui bono?* A hegemonic discourse is reasserted here, rather than questioned and transformed, by the introduction of a new category, which obscures cultural specificities, does away with national cinemas, and creates yet another abstract classification that undermines the possibility to configure a properly European cinema. Not a Euro-American hybrid, but historical events, situated cultural policies, transnational coproducing strategies and narratives are the terrain for the emergence of a "European" cinema in the 1990s.

POST–COLD WAR COPRODUCTIONS

The years 1988 and 1989 signaled a dramatic change of perspective, and of direction, in the field of the audiovisual media at large, and of cinema in particular. These dates evoke the historic-political events of a new era: the disarmament of the late 1980s, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the coup in Moscow in 1991, and the ensuing revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, which were to bring about a new map and a new sensibility. After preparatory meetings, green papers, and various communiqués under the patronage of the Council of Europe, 1988 was officially designated as European Cinema and Television Year, and 1989, the year of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, saw the launching of the *Television Without Frontiers Directive* (TVWF), which set about to create for the very first time one audiovisual area and a single market for television broadcasting in Europe. The quasi-simultaneous implementation of pan-European support mechanisms, mainly the MEDIA program and the Eurimages Fund, marked a new beginning for Europeanism. And it was in 1989 that the cinema and film professional magazines announced the return of coproductions.[42]

The introduction of European and pan-European directives and mechanisms was in the first place the result of the dismemberment of many forms of state intervention and the appearance of technological innovations such as cable and satellite broadcasting. If the phenomenon was part of the deregulation of the 1980s, a reregulation at a wider (read "continental") level was enacted to counter the centrifugal effects of the

loss of the various state monopolies and the overseas, by now called global, flooding of the markets. The purpose of the Broadcasting Directive was in fact "the establishment of a common market for broadcasting," which would encourage a free internal flow of European audiovisual products and services; specifically, it was to provide an unprecedented "modern legal framework" for a potentially enlarging market.[43] The directive was geared to attract a large response because of its commitment to promote "fundamental values common to the member states," while "its purpose is . . . not to impinge upon the domestic broadcasting policies and arrangements of the Parties."[44] It was precisely the preservation of national autonomy, together with the politics of an undefined commonality that lay bare the foundations of the new European integrationism. The call was directed not only to the already-consolidated nation-states of Western Europe, but also to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that had become formally independent after the collapse of Communism, as well as nonmember Western nations, like Switzerland.

The audiovisual common market seemed indeed to replicate the one at the core of the EEC. If it liberalized freedom and competition within the borders of the adhering members, it was simultaneously setting up harsher protective measures, particularly against the United States, which, as we have seen, had largely benefited from access to the European film market in the past. The novelty lay in the creation of a specific European audiovisual space, a new supranational dimension, whose existence was from now on to be reckoned with by the individual countries; in light of the newly created "legal framework," the latter were asked to reconcile their national laws with the supranational directive. The conflict between individual sovereignty and supranationalism was thus recast on a different terrain; it actually predated and somehow indicated the ways in which the new Europeanism would officially be redesigned by the Maastriicht Treaty of 1992.

The onset of a supranational audiovisual area reignited the corresponding conflict between the economic and cultural drives of Europeanism, as the constant allusions of spokespersons to both "a common market," and "a European space" imply and reveal. To this end, the historian Philip Schlesinger has pointed out how "the 'audiovisual' is both a symbolic arena and an economic one." Still he affirms that, in the context of the new Europe, "'culture' is clearly there to serve economic ends. It functions as a

discreet synonym for the protection of domestic production capacities and employment."[45]

This is not entirely the case; rather, the employment of culture to mobilize a European consciousness is unique to the historical moment of the 1990s and carries other implications. Its different usage is in line with a "complex society" like ours, a society in its post-industrial or late-capitalist contours. In an illuminating study, Alberto Melucci has described how the diffused movements that try to become new social actors operate nowadays outside of the closed categories of state, party, or organized group; that is, outside of a properly defined political system.[46] The specificity of the new movements resides instead in the production of cultural codes; culture—as symbolic activity and its products—becomes the condition of their existence and visibility.

In post-Communist and post–Cold War Europe, the waning of the repressive, monolithic ideology of Communism and the softening of the homogenizing nation-state operated by globalization, have propelled culture to the foreground, making it the essential instrument for identity and identification. Culture has in fact become the mobilizer of the new Europeanism, as Article 128 of the Maastricht Treaty spells out: "The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing their common cultural heritage to the fore."[47] The amendments undertaken first in Amsterdam (1997), then in Nice (2001), revised the Maastricht Treaty and consolidated Article 128 into Article 151, and made it, in its unadulterated form, the credo of the new Europeanism.

Article 151 was responsible for the implementation of *Culture 2000*, a new and distinctive Community program that deployed the concept of culture as a means of social integration. Designated to develop over seven years (2000–06), *Culture 2000* was expressly created to "integrate the cultural dimension into the Community policies."[48] The document is of special relevance because it acknowledges the dual nature of culture: "Culture is both an economic factor and a factor of integration and citizenship."[49] As such it seems to indicate the modified position assumed by the EU in response to the polarization engendered by the pivotal "cultural exception" debate between the United States and the European Union that developed at the GATT (General Agreements on Tariff and Trade) talks in 1993.

During those discussions, there was considerable debate over the inclusion of film and television in the agreement: the United States argued for their status as "product," whereas the Europeans held that they be excluded on the grounds that they were a "service" to the people. The parties eventually agreed to disagree, and film and television were left out of the final accords. This compromise came to be known as "the cultural exception," and it was claimed as a victory for the Europeans.

The question about the status of film and television is in itself far more instructive than is the legislation that it actually produced. Moreover, it signals a turning point for Europe and the Europeanism redesigned by the end of the Cold War. Historically, the crisis was provoked by the American agenda to deregulate the European film and television market, which aimed at eliminating the various quotas and state subsidies, which were perceived as obsolete obstacles against the interests of the new transnational corporations. The response could not have been anything but a defense of culture; this stance was championed by France, that European nation that had always been at the forefront of state subsidies, or, as Jacques Delors put it, of art subsidized by popes, monarchs, and rich benefactors.[50] The European position rested firmly on the notion of culture as builder of national identity and the bearer of that identity domestically and internationally. The American position was very much attuned to the burgeoning promises of the rampant neoliberal economy of the 1990s.

As a matter of fact, the polarization actually recast the old dualistic oppositions of art versus commerce and Hollywood versus European cinemas, with Europe representing a site of resistance against increasing Americanization, which was seen as coterminous with globalization. This repositioning made culture the term by which to confer identity onto Europe. This came at the very moment that this identity was challenged by the efforts to deregulate the power of the states and by the ulterior crisis induced by the dissolution of the Eastern bloc. In identifying "Europe" with "culture," it seemed possible (to Europeans) to decommodify the latter, to recover and reassert the Romantic ideal of a preindustrial use of art, when the "aura" could be preserved and withdrawn from technological reproduction and transnational circulation (all sins displaced onto the United States). In identifying "culture" with "nationhood," another drama (and dilemma) was reenacted, thereby pitting the national authority—seen as the legitimate repository of culture as nationhood—against the new supranational Europe, which had been officially

implemented in 1992 (one year prior to the GATT negotiations) and was largely perceived as a threat to national governments.

These multiple positions of defense, regression, and resistance were best embodied by France, which articulated de facto the European protest. Indeed, it is no surprise that "the cultural exception" became "the French exception" and that France took it upon itself to represent Europeanism while ultimately reasserting France, as the following remarks show: "The term 'l'exception française,' which emerged in the wake of the 1993 GATT agreements, signals an attempt to carve out a distinctive role for French culture in a changing world, in the face of both continuing Americanization and encroaching Europeanization."[51]

The GATT debate became the battleground for a host of different issues that extended well beyond the simplistic dualism of culture versus commodity. Such opposition has been misleading, not to mention the fact that it imposes limitations on the European audiovisual market itself. Indeed, to a Europe until then sealed off in its cultural and economic protectionism, the dilemma posed by the meetings and agendas of 1993 entailed the recognition that cultural products are also commodities, even as they perform other important functions ascribed to culture, namely conferring identity, visibility, and legitimacy, and maintaining authorship. The problem had and has to do with the expanding status of culture as industry in the age of globalization; in other words, with the difficulty of acknowledging different usages for different needs and differentiated audiences in different places, instead of asserting one hegemonic function, that of culture as nationhood. Thomas Elsaesser has brilliantly illustrated these dynamics, and shown how the New German Cinema became both a commodity and the signifier of a new identity, not to mention the symbolic weapon for a new legitimation of Germany.[52] The opposite also holds, namely, that what is perceived to be a commodity is not always necessarily the case; Hollywood cinema knows this well. In this sense, the GATT debates of 1993 mark the true point of entrance of Europe into the new Europeanism and a postmodern condition, both of which I take here as attempts at decentralization. Subsequently, the "French resistance" softened its stance by signing many deals with American companies while, as we have seen, the newly created European program *Culture 2000* officially recognized that "culture is an economic factor, and a factor of integration and citizenship."[53] The credo drives the major European and pan-European initiatives that have striven to forge a new supranational audiovisual space and that were inaugurated in the

first years of the post–Cold War era:[54] the MEDIA 92 program (set up in 1988 as *Mesures d'encouragement pour le développement de l'industrie audiovisuelle* and later renamed simply MEDIA), under the patronage of the new European Commission of Education and Culture, the multilateral support mechanism Eurimages and the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production.

Loosely structured around five-year plans, the various incarnations of one agency point to shifting interests. MEDIA I was operative from 1990 until 1995 and was followed by MEDIA II through 2000; the MEDIA Plus deadline was extended from 2005 to 2006, while MEDIA 2007 has already been set in place until 2013. At its inception, the mechanism was comprised of four segments—promotion, development, distribution, and training—and had the objective of creating a cohesive structure to stimulate production, intellectual exchange, and distribution. It soon became an essential Community program covering different enterprises. Among them were SCRIPT, the European Script Fund devoted to projects development; EUROAIM, the European Organization for an Audiovisual Independent Market, which brings together independent producers who are unable to be present individually at international festivals; and EFDO, the European Film Distribution Office, set to provide a support fund for the distribution of low-budget films in three or more countries. Thanks to MEDIA, the percentage of European films distributed outside their country of origin increased from less than 14 percent in 1996 to more than 22 percent in 1999. MEDIA would contribute up to 50 percent of the cost for a project; the rest would originate from both private financing and public funding.[55]

The program has proved essential in the case of small productions, especially for those originating in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where filmmakers are deprived of state support and economically stricken. Croatian-born director Lordan Zafranović's conviction that "the future of small European studios lies in coproductions" was endorsed by a recent initiative by MEDIA Plus[56]: the ten newcomers in 2004,[57] mostly from Central and Eastern Europe, have been invited to create a comedy series, with the dual goal of preserving local features while being understandable—and exportable—in the whole of Europe. This is the kind of coproduced projects intended to realize the credo of "unity and diversity" of the European Union.

As MEDIA 2007 is being launched, the different strands of the agency have been integrated into one single program, which has still

bifurcated along two main lines: preproduction and postproduction, namely, development and distribution, with the largest part of the budget allocated to distribution. Within this new perspective, special impetus has been accorded to the promotion of festivals. The decision to create a specific support scheme for festivals dates only to 2001. The objectives and the priorities set up by the program raise questions as to the role the festival is undertaking in redefining contemporary European cinema and to the public that is being addressed. "The MEDIA Plus program's scheme aims to support innovative audiovisual festivals that take place in countries participating in the MEDIA Plus program, which promote and screen significant proportions of European works to European audiovisual professionals and to the general public and which work in partnership with other European audiovisual festivals."[58] If, as Thomas Elsaesser pointedly observes, film festivals may be "the symbolic agoras of a new democracy—repositories and virtual archives of the revolutions that have failed to take place in Europe over the past 50–60 years," the films screened at festivals may well be considered as writing a new history of Europe and European cinema.[59]

The particular emphasis on distribution and the boost of festivals bear witness to the preeminence accorded to the circulation, exhibition, and consumption of visual works; these are most vulnerable areas for the constitution and projection of identity or identities. As the Explanatory Memorandum of MEDIA 2007 spells out, "Increased circulation of European audiovisual works has proved to be an important means of strengthening intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding and knowledge among European cultures to form a basis for European citizenship. . . . Unless Europeans are able to watch fiction, drama, documentaries and other works that reflect the reality of their own lives and histories, and those of their neighbors, they will cease to recognize and understand them fully."[60]

In light of such objectives, two important initiatives need to be singled out: EUROPA CINEMAS and the institution of the European Film Academy. EUROPA CINEMAS is a network of exhibition venues all across Europe created in 1992 with financing from the MEDIA program and the CNC in France. As "the first international film theatre network for the circulation of European films . . . Europa Cinemas is active in 325 European cities and supports 597 cinemas totaling 1,402 screens. . . . [I]ts objective is to increase programming of films from Europe and partner countries and raise the number of people attending these films

by fostering the circulation of national productions outside their frontiers."[61] The support is determined by the proportion of European films screened in the participating theatres, "with priority going to nondomestic productions, along with the total number of screens operated by the same theatre and the market share of European films in the country."[62] If the initiative asserts the objective of enlarging the audience, as witnessed by the fact that it is already operative in the ten new countries that joined the EU in 2004—most of them part of the former Eastern bloc—EUROPA CINEMAS strives to the same degree to forge an understanding of Europeanness at a wider level by encompassing and transcending previous borders.

This purpose is also shared by the screening network developed since 1995 in the Mediterranean area by EUROMED, a transnational framework of political, economic, and cultural cooperation between Europe and Mediterranean countries. As comprised of the EU Member States and ten Mediterranean Partners (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey), the EUROMED Audiovisual Program is set to expand the cinema network and the circulation of Mediterranean and European films in the interest of both a shared market and cultural affirmation.

The promotion of European film culture was the objective of establishing the European Film Academy in Berlin in 1988. The academy is presently under the presidency of Wim Wenders and is comprised of 1,700 cinema professionals from all over Europe. Throughout the year these professionals organize and participate in seminars, conferences, and workshops, and their activities culminate in the conferment of the European Film Awards (EFA).[63] Of the forty films submitted yearly, half are directly voted on by the members of the twenty European countries with the highest number of EFA members, while the other half are selected by a committee and a group of experts nominated by the EFA board. Films have to qualify as European works according to the criteria established by the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production, which I will be discussing shortly. The awards are announced at a ceremony that takes place each year in a different location; on December 2, 2006, it was held for the first time in Eastern Europe, in Warsaw, as acknowledgement of the new geography of Europe and the extension of the EU.

The list of Best European Films, since the inception of the awards, reads like a possible repository of imagings and imaginings for post-1989

Europe and European cinema. These films tackle issues pertaining to a common European history and cultural heritage, together with more contemporary issues addressing nationalism, migration, identity, and gender politics: Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Krótki Film Ozabijaniu* (*A Short Film about Killing*, 1988); Theo Angelopoulos' *Topio stin omichili* (*Landscape in the Mist*, 1989); Gianni Amelio's *Porte aperte* (*Open Doors*, 1990), *Il ladro di bambini* (*Stolen Children*, 1992), and *Lamerica* (1994); Nikita Mikhalkov's *Urga* (1993); Ken Loach's *Riff-Raff* (1991) and *Land and Freedom* (1995); Peter Cattaneo's *The Full Monty* (1997); Roberto Benigni's *La vita è bella* (*Life is Beautiful*, 1998); Pedro Almodóvar's *Todo sobre mi madre* (*All About My Mother*, 1999) and *Hable con ella* (*Talk to Her*, 2002); Lars von Trier's *Breaking the Waves* (1996) and *Dancer in the Dark* (2000); Jean-Pierre Jeunet's *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (2001), Wolfang Becker's *Good Bye Lenin!* (2003); Fatih Hakin's *Gegen die Wand* (*Head On*, 2004); Michael Haneke's *Caché* (*Hidden*, 2005); and Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's *Das Leben der Anderen* (*The Lives of Others*, 2006).[64]

Initiatives like EUROPA CINEMAS and the EFA awards are attempts to mobilize a supranational audience, or at a deeper cultural level a collective consciousness. They are only at the initial stage and still have to garner widespread visibility and a wider consensus. The EFA awards are not very well known yet, while EUROPA CINEMAS has managed, by contrast, to widen the exhibition venues and the number of European films on the screen; the opportunity offered by such a mechanism to see twice as many European films as before, as reported by director Jaromil Jireš in the Czech Republic,[65] is crucial to the development of the idea of and a feeling for Europe.

Of all the current support mechanisms, the mainstay of the new Europeanism is certainly the pan-European Eurimages. The fund was established by twelve members in 1989 as an unprecedented support source for the coproduction and distribution of creative cinematographic and audiovisual works;[66] it rests on the contributions of each of the fund's member states and the associate countries, together with repaid loans, donations, legacies, and other payments. Loans are granted free of interest, to be repaid when the film makes a profit. Support is granted to films that already have 50 percent of their financing covered, and the contribution from public or private sources may not exceed 70 percent of the production costs. The scheme particularly seeks to stimulate cooperation between partners with high and low production potential; as such it

favors the smaller countries. Indeed, "Eurimages has greatly expanded the range and diversity of projects from European countries that had been minority participants in EU commercial filmmaking."[67] This has proved highly beneficial to the former countries of Central and Eastern Europe, whose previous total dependence on state subsidies left them in disarray once the state crumbled. Eurimages has become an important pan-European coproducing source that has kept alive a cinematographic output in countries where production otherwise would have stopped.[68]

Eurimages has constantly prioritized the cultural relevance of the projects it has sustained because these were deemed to be vehicles of European identity. In 2000, however, the fund was slightly reformulated so that support has since been awarded under two schemes: the first one bestows financial assistance "on the basis of the project's circulation potential," while the second one provides assistance "on the basis of artistic value."[69] The change might indicate a more global reconfiguration, where the "circulation potential" seems to address commercial viability and worldwide export, while "the artistic value" seeks to prioritize characteristics of a different nature, namely "art house films with strong artistic potential, and films that are more innovative in their form and subject."[70] However, after internal bureaucratic tensions, the fund reconfirmed the intention to continue its sponsoring activities on the basis of artistic criteria. It must be said that the fund has played an indispensable role in many coproduced projects in tending to expenses specific to coproduction, namely manufacturing copies, translation, subtitling, dubbing, and distribution. A most recent innovation is the aid granted for digitization, which may cover up to 80 percent of the total digitizing costs. As measure of its success Anne Jäckel reports that the involvement of Eurimages in cinematographic coproductions had increased from 17 percent in 1989 to 46 percent in 1996, and concludes that "'Eurimages' contributions seemed to illustrate that economic and cultural development approaches to cinema could be reconciled."[71]

In 1992 the Council of Europe issued the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production, with the intent of streamlining the substantial increase in multilateral coproduction, which was gaining momentum in a new borderless Europe. The new treaty did not replace the previous bilateral agreements, which, as we have seen, many governments in Europe have had in place since the 1950s; instead, it supplemented them with a regulatory framework intended to address the new multilateral treaties and intervene where no bilateral treaty was in place.

The rate of adherence and process of ratification were at first slow because the Eurimages fund did not require coproductions to adhere to the terms of the Convention to access its funding. Since this prerequisite was enforced, the Convention has been adopted by thirty-seven member states, the latest of which were Turkey and Armenia in 2005, while other countries, like Bosnia-Herzegovina and Ukraine, are in accession status. Unlike other pan-European initiatives, the treaty specifically concerns only cinematographic coproduction as a unique "instrument of creation and expression of cultural diversity on a European scale."[72] For the first time, the Convention envisions a supranational European cinema, one that includes and does not replace national industries and national markets. As such, it replicates and reveals the dynamics of supranational and national that is at the core of the new Europeanism. The notions of 'European' and the safeguarding of nationality are indeed the guiding principles of works—properly indicated as "works of fiction, cartoons and documentaries"—that claim to represent both Europe and the countries that have taken part in its making. Post-1989 European cultural policy bestows on coproduced films a previously nonexistent seal of Europeanness in the attempt to shape a new Europe.

In detail, the qualification of "European cinematographic work" rests on a point scale that establishes that the work has to achieve at least fifteen points out of a total of nineteen, distributed between "creative group," "performing group," and "technical craft group."[73] All of the producers have to be nationals of the states that have signed the convention; should this not be the case, there must be at least three producers from three states who provide at least 70 percent of the production finance. Most notably, the coproduced work becomes in effect a national film of each of the coproducing nations: "The chief aim of a co-production agreement is to confer on cinematographic works that can lay claim to it the nationality of each of the partners in the co-production."[74] This means that a film can be granted tax breaks and other state incentives in each of the countries that are parties to the coproduction; the fundamental advantage of coproducing is indeed access to multiple governments' subsidies, multiple markets, and other resources in all the countries involved. The result is that a film is recognized as both national and European at both the economic and the symbolic level.

The classical and earlier form of coproduction that dates from the 1950s to the late 1970s was based on a proportional system in which financial input would match the artistic and technical participation. In

this respect, the Convention has introduced a new form of "financial coproduction": a purely financial contribution, neither less than 10 percent nor more than 25 percent, from a minority partner, with no requirement of an equivalent artistic and technical participation. This modality has been implemented to circumvent the creation of artificial works in which actors and technicians are chosen on the basis of their nationality to satisfy the national quota, rather than for reasons linked to the coherence of the work. The label of "Europudding" bears witness to such a practice.

Instead, cofinancing has been specifically set up to safeguard the cultural specificity and creative integrity of the work: "Financial co-productions may prove a particularly appropriate instrument for the development of European cultural identity, or identities. In fact, by mobilizing substantial financial resources from several European countries while respecting the national identity of the majority producer, who is the real artistic driving force behind the work, they will make a real contribution to an expression of national cultures that are authentic."[75]

Cofinancing tends to be a more favored approach to coproduction than equal sharing between artistic and financial entities because it is more expeditious—it takes usually the form of presale to a television channel or theatrical distributor—but also because it promises to preserve a cultural specificity and a creative control that seem threatened, again, by the multiplicity of sources.

A LAND FOR EUROPEAN CINEMA: *LAND AND FREEDOM* AND *NO MAN'S LAND*

Cultural specificity, creative integrity, *and* multiple sources of funding inform two of the most significant and successful post-1989 European films, *Land and Freedom* (1995, UK/Spain/Germany/Italy) and *No Man's Land* (2001, Bosnia/Herzegovina/Slovenia/ Belgium/France/UK). *Land and Freedom*, by British director Ken Loach, and *No Man's Land*, by Bosnian émigré Danis Tanović, articulate a post-1989 European cinema and European identity firmly grounded in the specific post–Cold War historical juncture and sensibility. They do so at the level of both the cultural industry and the images they conjure up on the screen. It is no accident that the two films are grouped together, as they share more than the word *land* in the title; they both invoke and question the idea of common territory and common belonging.

The films follow in the path of the Television Without Frontiers Directive, the new audiovisual policy launched in 1989 with the intention of creating a single European space; the directive was also responsible for the implementation of the European and pan-European mechanisms Eurimages, the MEDIA program, and the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production of 1992. As we have seen, such support mechanisms rest on article 151 of the consolidated European Treaty, according to which the Community is committed to fostering a "common cultural heritage," and promoting the "flowering of the cultures of the Member States while respecting their national and regional diversity," as reported in the Maastricht Treaty.[76] The workings of the audiovisual industry at large, and cinematographic coproductions in our particular case, replicate and reveal the dynamics of supranational and national at the core of the new Europeanism, and as such posit a new European configuration.

Both films, from their different vantage points, depict a Europe grappling with the issue of a post-1989 cultural identity. This includes, but does not replace, national industries, local contributions, and cultural and regional specificities. As products of a collective European involvement in terms of funding, creative talent, and technical staff, the films voice a European dimension; at the same time, they manage to forge an imaging of Europe that is nonetheless grounded in its cultural, ethnic, and linguistic differences. Both films are inscribed into two highly significant moments of the new Europeanism, and they "invent" different Europes for a national, supranational, and global audience. Last but not least, the success, critical discourse, and number of awards the films have garnered seem to legitimize such new constructions and prove to be instrumental in disseminating a new European cinema.

Land and Freedom was coproduced between the UK, Spain, Germany, and Italy, with the support of the Eurimages Fund of the Council of Europe, the European Co-Production Fund, and the very local municipal Generalitat de Catalunya. The film, loosely based on George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, used a multinational cast of amateur and professional actors, was spoken in English and Spanish, shot in Spain, and directed by a British director. David, a young, out-of-work Communist from Liverpool, joins the POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista, the Labor Party of Marxist Unification), the anarchist movement on the Left that will be eventually absorbed into the official Stalinist Communist Party. When David realizes that the Stalinists are

betraying the revolution, he tears up his party card. In the end, when the POUM is outlawed, David's militia is forcibly disbanded, its commander arrested, and Blanca—the love-interest who embodies the POUM, the revolution, and Spain, the *tierra y libertad* of the film—is dramatically killed by the Popular Army.

Significantly, the film starts out in present-day London, where David's granddaughter rushes him to the hospital, then plunges back through David's past by means of his letters from 1936 read in voice-over by the granddaughter, only to return to the present time for the burial of David at the end of the film. In this way, the long flashback succeeds in foregrounding a possible continuity, historical and ideological, between the Spanish Civil War and the present, between Spain and England, and between David and his granddaughter, who spreads out on his coffin some of the "tierra," the ground that David had gathered at Blanca's burial and that he had loyally guarded in Blanca's red scarf, after his return from Spain. Thus the testimonial is being passed on, and David's granddaughter can now inherit his legacy: a new revolution, though one of different sign, may still take place in Europe in the late 1980s.

As much as it may sound like a meditation on nostalgia, as several critics have argued, this is not a film of nostalgia, one that looks at the past in an attempt to escape the present. On the contrary, the past provides the metaphoric foundational moment in which a new Europeanism is established. In this case, volunteers from all over Europe—Germany, France, England, Ireland and Italy—came together in the fight against Spanish Fascism. This past is openly invoked to mobilize the present, as Loach links the Europe of the 1930s to the Europe of the 1980s; the latter provides a renewed possibility for Europeans to unite or come together, as they had in 1936. The Spanish Civil War had in fact sparked a sentiment for a European and larger international solidarity, even if in the film the American character ultimately sides with the party line, aligning in this way Communist totalitarianism and capitalism. If the utopia of establishing one socialist Europe failed in 1936, Loach suggests that a new opportunity seems to present itself in the 1980s, with the resumption of the European project, through the new European Union, the Maastricht Treaty, and the building of "a common European home," in the words of one of its early visionaries, Mikhail Gorbachev.

In this regard, *Land and Freedom* reconstructs, or rather constructs, a common past in order to project a future European identity, a "historical destiny-as-legacy,"[77] which Thomas Elsaesser, in a different context,

deems an enterprise that the whole of Europe undertook with regards to Fascism and the Second World War. When the protagonist of the film says "revolutions are contagious," we may infer that the legacy of the European Left could be picked up by the renewed Europeanism, and—more specifically—by England itself, whose 1980s conservatism is also a target of the British director's wake-up call.

The film resonates with what I would call the first-wave Europeanism, as it recasts the hopes and exhilaration of the time of its making, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and more specifically the early 1990s, with the subsequent velvet revolutions, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and the ultimate demise of Communist totalitarianism. In this respect, *Land and Freedom* partakes closely of the process of historical revisionism that erupted in the wake of the coup in Moscow in 1991, which included a thorough rethinking and devastating critique of Soviet ideology. To this purpose, it has been stated that "Loach and [cowriter Jim] Allen have produced the first major film that tells the truth about the crimes of Stalin against the working class and socialism. This is a genuine breakthrough."[78] Although the article appeared on the World Socialist Web Site, the comment reflected nonetheless a widespread attitude of dismissing Communism in tune with the historical moment.

In Spain the film was praised most enthusiastically: *El Pais* considered it "this tender, yet furious picture . . . incomparable . . . it is the most beautiful tribute that the cinema has given to the memory of a free Spain."[79] *El Mundo*'s deadline read, "Gracias por todo, Mr. Loach."[80] Given such a perspective, the fact that *Land and Freedom* was Spain's entry at the Cannes film festival in 1995 shows to what extent the film became the herald of anti-Communist or, as quoted above, "free"—understood as prepoliticized—anarchist Spain. The unrealized and imaginary unity of Spain in 1936 could, however, offer the opportunity to cleanse the past; elide the ideological differences and the many political conflicts between Nationalists, Republicans, Marxists, Anarchists, and Catalonian fighters; and thus legitimize the new liberated Spain of the 1980s, which was not only post-Franco but then also post-Communist. It is not a surprise, then, that the film encountered the favor of a new generation, the many young moviegoers in Spain who admitted to learning about those aspects of the Civil War for the first time.[81]

The numerous international awards only emphasized the underlying recognition that the movie endorsed a new Europeanism and contributed to a transnational European cinema. The film received the

European Film Award granted by the European Film Academy, the Prize of the Ecumenical Jury, the Cannes Fipresci Prize in 1995 as well as a César Award in France and a Goya Award in Spain.

If *Land and Freedom* belongs to the first moment of the post–Berlin Wall Europeanism and voices the high hopes of redrawing the map of Europe after 1989, *No Man's Land*, made only a few years later in 2001, presents us with a different, darker scenario, one that is also, surprisingly, linked to the Spanish Civil War. The film was coproduced by Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, France, Slovenia, Italy, and the UK, and it benefited from the support of the pan-European fund Eurimages. It presented a multinational cast of Bosnian, Serbian, Slovenian, Croat, French, and English actors, as well as a mostly Belgian technical crew, and all the corresponding languages were employed in the narrative—a truly European enterprise in the words of the director, young Bosnian Danis Tanović, who first migrated to Belgium, then to France, after having been responsible for the Bosnian documentary film archive during the first two years of the war.[82] The film is the product of European involvement in terms of financial input and talent; it squarely addresses a post-Wall Europe, yet it is firmly situated in the specific Yugoslav conflict.

The film speaks of a different moment and gives a different view of the unification of Europe so enthusiastically advocated in the 1980s. The title itself, *No Man's Land*, negates the promise of place and belonging that the title of Loach's film had instead envisaged: "land and freedom" have become a no man's land, a lonely *terra incognita*. The interim between the making of the films had produced the disillusionment and even the cynicism that inform Tanović's vision: the breakup of Yugoslavia; the Bosnian war; the siege of Sarajevo; and the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995, which offered an "absence of war" rather than real peace. Even worse was the first military intervention in 1999 of the United Nations, a body specifically designed for peacekeeping purposes at the end of World War II, which was now betraying its mandate. As the film makes repeated stabs at the ineptitude of the UN, as well as the complicit consuming gaze of the Western media, it is impossible not to recall those events and how they fueled contradictory feelings of adhesion, supposed neutrality, and ultimately disavowal and guilt in the West, more precisely in the European Union, which had failed in its mission.

Quickly declared and dismissed as an antiwar film by Western reviewers, Tanović's movie, about a Serb and a Bosnian soldier caught together in an open trench, cannot be discarded as another portrayal of the

Balkans as the phantasmic projection of the West that Maria Todorova, Slavoj Zižek, and Dina Iordanova have long argued.[83] There is no doubt, however, that the unbelievable number of international awards it received goes some way toward explaining the film's success precisely because of its Balkanism; in short, because of those very qualities of fragmentation, chaotic irrationality, savage instincts, and primordial passions that the West has construed as representing the Balkans. Tanović, however, returns the balkanizing look at the end of the film, when he has the UN peacekeeping soldier fire irrationally at the Bosnian Ciki. Is Tanović reversing the roles by pointing his finger at the irrational West? Is the West responding and appeasing its conscience by bestowing all imaginable prizes on an "antiwar" film, which is, in any case, "less virulent, and more discursive and more accessible than many of the more disturbing Bosnian movies, and this may be part of what won it the Oscar for best foreign film"?[84] The Oscar, the Golden Globe, the EFA for Best European Film of 2002, and the other prizes received at Cannes, Chicago, Oslo, San Sebastian, and Sao Paulo for a total of forty-two, seem to endorse such a view.

However, the reversed Balkanism of a divided Europe staged by the film translates the disappointment of the late 1990s toward the failed integration of Europe—a post-Dayton, post-Sarajevo Europe—and advances, instead, a growing and widespread disbelief in such a possibility. Paradoxically, though, the condition of a deteriorating Europe

Figure 2.1 *No Man's Land*: Ciki and Nino in the trench

might feel reassuring to a certain Western audience: that growing European audience of moviegoers who hold onto their national identities and governments vis-à-vis the threat of a supranational body, as well as that wider international audience that would not feel threatened by the divided, Balkanized Europe envisaged in the film.

The reception of the film in the Balkans tells another story, as the film was seen as sanctioning and legitimizing the new nation-states that emerged from the breakup of Yugoslavia. *No Man's Land* was considered a Slovenian film, and received an award at the Slovenian film festival, for the country "took great pride in its contribution to the film by the national industry."[85] As a partner in the coproduction, having provided the main location, Slovenia could in fact claim *No Man's Land* as a national film. But international recognition was even more important than the official designation as a domestic product. For the newly formed nation-state, the national, supranational, and international affirmation granted to the film would bestow quasi-official legitimization, an assertion of its new identity. A similar destiny awaited the film in Sarajevo, but with ulterior implications.

In an interview, Tanović acknowledged the special significance of the film being entered in the Sarajevo Film Festival, even if he had just received the prize for best script at Cannes.[86] Despite the fact that *No Man's Land* was seen as "a foreign production," it was still considered "indubitably more 'Bosnian' than anything else,"[87] and it went on to win the best film and best audience awards at the festival. Moreover, the film was submitted as the Bosnian entry in the foreign film category of the 2002 Oscars. At the ceremony, Tanović shouted that the Oscar was for "my country," and when, after the victory, he went on to Sarajevo, he again claimed that the statuette was for Bosnia in front of a cheering crowd that was expecting him at the airport. The film was broadcast on television in the entire republic and was seen by over 200,000 people. Cinema had succeeded in the most difficult task of constructing and disseminating a previously nonexistent identity. The country was acquiring a new identity through having *No Man's Land* endorsed at the national, supranational, and international levels. Even more important, that identity rested on positioning or repositioning Bosnia as the victim of the war in the Balkans, as we witness in the final shot of the movie, where the Bosnian Cera lies on a bounding mine while the camera pulls back and mercilessly places the spectator in charge of a controlling, killing gaze.

Figure 2.2 *No Man's Land*: Cera on the bounding mine

Cera lies on a mine made in the European Union. He cannot be removed without the mine exploding, but the mine cannot be defused, so he is left to die there in the setting sun, the ultimate sacrificial lamb to be immolated by careless and ineffective UN officers and devouring Western media. The film closes indeed on a powerful indictment of what Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit call "Occidentalism"[88] and on a final image of sacrifice, as in many other films from and on the Balkans: *Cabaret Balkan* (1998); *Underground* (1995); *Pretty Village*, *Pretty Flame* (1996); *The Wounds* (1998); *Welcome to Sarajevo* (1997); *Lana's Rain* (2002); and *Vukovar poste restante* (1994).

Danis Tanović has repeatedly equated the status of victims of the Jews in World War II with that of the Bosnians in 1993,[89] as did Bernard-Henri Lévy forcefully, in his documentary *Bosna* of 1994. This is not a casual connection, because so much in Tanović's film seems mediated by that documentary: the fact that Bosnia is already called "No Man's Land," as well as the particular episode of the French colonel who does not want to desert the refugees. These seem to have been the blueprint for Marchand, the French soldier who stands up to UN officers in the film. By way of name assonance and role, I cannot resist linking Marchand to the Marechal of *The Grand Illusion (1937)* by Jean Renoir, another embodiment of humanism at low ranks. More significant is the conflation of Bosnians with the Spanish Republicans that Bernard-Henri Lévy provides in his documentary by cross cutting between contemporary images of the Balkan war with footage from 1936; one special shot

stands out, one where we can read on a sign the words: "No pasaran." This was the slogan the POUM militia, Blanca, and David would repeat over and over in *Land and Freedom*, the one that David's granddaughter utters and thus reclaims at his burial.

It seems that Bernard-Henri Lévy, Ken Loach and Danis Tanović share and powerfully express a logic of victimizer and victimized that crosses over the divide between Eastern and Western Europe, between 1936 and 1992, and between World War II and the contemporary war in the Balkans. All three works seem to rest on the idea of sacrifice: the sacrifice of Spain and the sacrifice of Bosnia. As such they could be made to speak of a Europe that could painfully come together only thanks to the immolation of its victims. While Loach's film could still sustain such a view, *No Man's Land* operates beyond this framework.

To understand the different logic, we need resort to the concepts of "sovereign power" and "*homo sacer*" as elaborated by Giorgio Agamben.[90] Since the Aristotelian formulation of Western civilization, the relationship that binds the subject to society is one in which a sovereign power holds the citizen as *homo sacer* "a life that can be killed but cannot be sacrificed." That means that the human being is considered as "naked life," a life that is virtually subject to death but cannot be either immolated or redeemed. Specifically, Agamben observes that the social pact that characterizes the age of modernity is not based on a mutually–agreed-upon contract, nor on conventions, but rather on the "ban": *homo sacer* is, therefore, the individual as banned, or separated from society; this is, however, a condition of "inclusive exclusion," where he is included only insofar as he lives in a state of exclusion, namely a position of potential elimination. This happens in a state of "exception," which Agamben calls "*dissolutio civitatis*," when law and rights are suspended, violence overlaps with Right, and the two become indistinguishable. Such a situation can actually become normalized. It is indeed the state of emergency as norm, which constitutes man as *homo sacer*, a "bare life" that can be killed with impunity because the one who kills does not commit a sacrilege, and cannot be prosecuted. Agamben finds this condition best exemplified by life in the concentration camp, which he believes offers the paradigm of modernity. He rejects any logic of immolation, though, by asserting that the Jews were not sacrificed in a gigantic holocaust; rather, they were eliminated precisely insofar as they were understood as "bare life," or "naked life," without any further motif.[91]

The last shot of *No Man's Land* stages a state of exception, where individual rights are suspended, and violence and Right have blurred: Cera lies on the bounding mine, abandoned by the UN forces, the dismissive British journalist and TV crew, and even by the humanitarian Marchand. He is stripped of any right, reduced to "bare life," a life that can be killed while the killer—the UN, Europe, the West—goes unpunished. Cera is a *homo sacer*, a living dead, but not a sacrificial victim. Indeed, no redeeming explosion shatters the screen, rather, the film ends with the disembodied aerial view of Cera in the liminality of the trench, as if to underline that the state of exception has turned permanent, and Cera and Bosnia are part of an "inclusive exclusion." Both Bosnia and Europe live in an open trench, a "no man's land," which we can take as the truer meaning for exception. According to such a perspective, Tanović's film seems to reject the very potentiality of a new Europe that *Land and Freedom*, instead, advocated with fervor.

However, we need only to recall that the mine under Cera has been made in the EU to understand how Bosnia is inextricably linked to Europe; the relationship is that of "inclusive exclusion," where Bosnia can be part of Europe because it can be excluded, or " killed"; namely, severed from it. In this case, though, Europe would also be affected. If Cera were removed, the mine would explode and kill Cera, but it would also destroy itself, or more precisely the idea of a renewed Europeanism as symbolized by the European Union. Ultimately, the state of exclusion, of virtual killability, is also what gives Cera and Bosnia a presence and an identity; rather than a question of sacrifice, it is a question of affirmation, because both Cera and Bosnia can be object and subject at one time.

Since the Dayton Agreements of 1995, the newly formed nation-state of Bosnia-Herzegovina has been living in a condition of exception as described by Agamben, that of a country "exceptionally" patrolled by UN forces; as the situation has turned "ordinary" for the last twelve years, Bosnia's destiny is not victim to, but closely intertwined with that of a new Europe, as both are in the "exceptional" state of a no man's land.

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Part II

In Search of Unlost Narratives

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CHAPTER 3

Nostalgia as a Weak Utopia for Europe

Nostalghia is a film from the "other Europe" made by Andrei Tarkovsky in 1983 well before the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) but at a highly significant moment in the evolution of the events that would eventually culminate in the Moscow coup in 1991. The work marks a shift from the "stagnation" of the late 1960s to the early 1980s, toward a transitional period characterized by the new winds of *glasnost* ("openness") and *perestroika* ("restructuring"). These two new factors did indeed awaken a lethargic society under the charismatic guidance of the last Party Secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev, who was elected in 1985. The singularity of the film lies in the fact that it stands as a historical utopia, one that bespeaks a reconfiguration of a Europe yet to exist but being mobilized by the revived European movement as it was emerging with the end of the Cold War.

In order to comprehend *Nostalghia*'s significance in a discourse on contemporary Europe, it is crucial to bear in mind the director's timing and the historical geography of production. It was the first time that Tarkovsky, a Soviet director, was allowed to shoot outside of the Soviet Union, specifically in Italy, and the film was the first cinematographic coproduction between Western Europe and the USSR. It tapped the combined resources of RAI, the Italian state television; the Moscow-based Sovinfilm, sponsored by Goskino (the State Committee on Cinema); and the last-minute financing of Daniel Toscan du Plantier from Gaumont. The Russian director had also joined forces with a "Westerner," the Italian poet and screenwriter Tonino Guerra, who regularly collaborated with Federico Fellini and Michelangelo Antonioni, among others.[1] Finally, Tarkovsky, who knew no Italian and was separated

from his family during filming (his wife would only later be allowed to join him from Russia), experienced this period as voluntary exile. The Soviet director would eventually choose such a status permanently in 1984, immediately after the completion of the film, when he eventually "defected" to the West and became formally exiled.[2]

These disparate events make *Nostalghia* a unique ideological film about the clash and encounter between Eastern and Western Europe at a significant moment in European history—as well as in Tarkovsky's individual history. Although it was made before the end of the Cold War, *Nostalghia* is embedded in the oncoming historical climate and stands as an essential embodiment *ante litteram* of post–Cold War Europe. Tarkovsky sets out to assess the different, yet parallel, conditions of the two Europes at the moment when the opposing blocs were both on the verge of losing the antagonism between the West and the East that was also the mark of their identification. Situated at a historic crossroads, the film strenuously attempts to posit a common European identity, which it is able to inflect with alterity.

The encounter of two different cultures is consciously acknowledged by Tarkovsky. *Nostalghia* deals with a Russian scholar, Andrei Gorchacov, traveling through Italy in the company of a mesmerizing Italian translator, Eugenia, in order to research a Russian composer named Sosnovsky, who had lived there during the previous century. Andrei encounters a "madman," Domenico, who had locked himself and his family away for seven years to await the end of the world. Domenico wants now to save mankind from self-destruction by carrying a lit candle across St. Catherine's pool to the thermal baths of Bagno Vignoni, the Tuscan hillside village where Gorchacov is staying. Since he is unable to complete the task, Domenico gives the candle to Andrei, proceeds to Rome, and in the middle of a street demonstration sets himself on fire. Before this final act, he asks Eugenia, a silent and horrified spectator in the onlooking crowd, whether Andrei had carried out his mission. Andrei, who in the meantime has decided to leave Italy, returns to the now empty pool, and after repeated attempts, carries the lit candle across and then collapses.

With Andrei as the Russian exile in the West, *Nostalghia* openly addresses the partition of Europe produced by the geopolitics of the Iron Curtain after World War II and the earlier schism of the Christian Orthodox Church in 1054, which marked a much more primordial "wall" between East and West in Europe. The film questions such a polarization by grounding itself in, all the while destructuring from

within, the Marxian process of dialectics, the quintessential modern instrument for change and transformation. Through the conscious use (and misuse) of dialectical strategies, Tarkovsky sets out to construct a weak utopia for a post–Cold War Europe that did not yet exist in 1983 but corresponded to the design of the European Union that would be created at Maastricht in 1992. Although operating within a dialectical framework, Tarkovsky modifies it so as to generate a vision of Europe that is able to preserve differences. The film proceeds through the juxtaposition of thesis and antithesis, though one that does not produce a wholly new and higher unity. Instead, the two poles remain and preserve distinctive traits, though they still yearn for reconciliation. In the film's final scene, this appears in the form of a "weak" synthesis, which Tarkosvky indicates is the possibility of reconfiguring a different Europe.

The opening sequence of *Nostalghia* presents a primary example of an unresolved dialectical construction and thus offers the structuring paradigm of the whole film. A Russian monochromatic landscape with two women, a girl, a boy, and a horse immersed in the mist—a dog and house appear later—fades slowly into the pallid color of the Tuscan landscape soaked in vapors. We see a car and hear Andrei in voice-over say that he is tired of all "these sickeningly beautiful things." Two opposing worlds—Russia, memory, dreams, past, and childhood, and then Italy, present, exile, adulthood, and technology—are quickly evoked and established. At the same time, though, they seem to merge through the use of black and white in the Russian landscape and a similar etiolated color for the Italian landscape. The two seemingly opposite universes are thus almost equated by means of dim light, color (or its absence), dripping water, mist, fumes, the scarcity of human presence, and the long silences, yet they retain their metaphoric opposition. They will merge again, though, in further parallel melancholic images, as underscored at one point by Andrei's words—"It's like Russia here, I don't know why"—only to be separated time and time again in the course of the film, until the last shot will realize what would ordinarily be an impossible synthesis.

The film progresses through sets of binary opposites. The Renaissance Tuscan village is in ruins, deprived of sunlight, nearly deserted, turned into a signifier of the collapse of Western civilization, which is later conveyed by the materialistic greed of Eugenia's rescued fiancé and further symbolized by Verdi's *Requiem*. Eugenia, looking herself like an exquisite Renaissance icon, enters the church at Monterchi to admire the *Madonna del Parto* (*Madonna of Childbirth*), a fifteenth-century masterpiece by Piero

della Francesca, to whom infertile women would pray to seek the intercession of the Virgin. The words of the sacristan, "a woman is meant to be a mother," reverberate as small birds are released and fly from the belly of the Madonna. Eugenia, however, is unable to kneel down. The West, identified with her and the beautiful artifacts of its past, has dried up, and infertility has become a plague. But when the camera pans slightly to the right, it reveals a dacha in the countryside, along with a woman, children, and a dog. These figures materialize the Russian East and connote nature, home, family, and maternity, which are contrasted to the dying West. In a sort of montage, Tarkovsky has established an apparent conflict between West and East, but he suggests that it might not actually exist by using of the smooth pan that extends from the Italian present over to the Russian past, ultimately maintaining the metaphoric opposition. Similarly, Andrei is attracted to both Eugenia and his wife, who appears in his dreams and memories. In a black-and-white dream reminiscent of Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1966), Andrei's wife and Eugenia actually embrace in a chiaroscuro light that evokes the Western conventions of painting and reveals Andrei's desire for both women, both worlds. The two faces on the screen seem to want to merge, but they remain separate

Figure 3.1 *Nostalghia:* The Russian wife and the Italian translator

in a resplendent light and dark composition, which becomes for the spectator the object of an equally split identification and desire.

Tarkovsky repeatedly stages a post-apocalyptic West against the image of a rural and timeless Russian land in the consuming attempt to bring the two Europes together. Both worlds attest to "the end of modernity" as conceptualized by Gianni Vattimo in his formulation of "weak thought": modernity is completed or exhausted but not terminated, nor does it disappear.[3] That process is still at work, but in a "weakened" way, and it is expressly the "weakness" or decline of the ideals of modernity that allows realizing them differently.

This is precisely what *Nostalghia* accomplishes: it turns what it depicts as the decline of both Europes into an opportunity. In the film, both Western and Soviet Europe have fully realized their master narrative of progress and emancipation. In other words, they have completed their trajectory toward modernity along different paths. This is reflected in the debris and chiaroscuro still life compositions in the decrepit hut of Domenico, the empty streets littered with rubbish and newspapers, the mist that never lifts in the Tuscan village, and the shabby and unkempt looks of Domenico, all of which are fragments of a rotten civilization. The most telling example is when Domenico smears himself with gasoline and takes his life on the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, in the center of Rome, among a mixed crowd of onlookers and patients of an asylum,[4] while a harsh-sounding gramophone diffuses the notes of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*[5] and Schiller's *Ode to Joy*. Civilization—symbolically represented by Rome, the conqueror on horseback, and Beethoven—has been reached and therefore exhausted. Andrei further acknowledges the apocalypse of Western Europe by saying to the little girl Angela, a terrestrial angel, "I'm the one who should be afraid, . . . in Italy everybody shoots." With these words reality becomes part of the fiction, while the fiction identifies the historical period. Andrei evokes Italy of the early 1980s—the time of filming—which substantiates Tarkovsky's view and supports Vattimo's position. During this period Italy was shaken by numerous terrorist acts, the most daring being the bomb explosion in 1980 at the railway station in Bologna, which resulted in nearly one hundred deaths. Also close at hand was the memory of the kidnapping and the horrific murder by the Red Brigades of Prime Minister Aldo Moro in 1978.[6] The historical events confirm the idea of a collapsed West that has fulfilled its ideology of progress and can offer nothing more than ruins.

Figure 3.2 *Nostalghia*: Domenico on the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius

Russia is in the same terminal condition. In this case, the modern promise of the perfect future, the Marxist utopia as realized by totalitarian Communism, has also been exhausted, but this time through the erasure of history. Communism has in fact achieved its goal of rational totalization of the world, at least in the Soviet Union, by annihilating the passage of time. Hence the recurring image in the film of what seems to be a timeless dacha in the countryside, a natural, primordial world stuck in time. Rather than an essentialized, prehistorical, and primitive Eden, and a rejection of the historical present, as they might appear at first glance, these aching images of an immemorial past translate instead the accomplishment of totalitarian Communism, which was achieved by a total annihilation of history.[7]

Having thus reached the end, in the sense of having completed their diverse trajectories, the two Europes are presented with the opportunity to renounce a transcendental project and fall back into time and history: their collapse becomes the *condicio sine qua non* for a different configuration. Both West and the East are ultimately in this condition, a condition that Vattimo calls *Verwindung*,[8] an "overcoming" of the past that entails not a cancellation, but a tenuous or weakened permanence and redirection of that past. It is not a question of rejection, which would

nonetheless reinstate a new cycle and a new apocalypse, or of a return in the sense of a regression to the past and to the homeland, but of a return in the sense of a "recollection."

Indeed, Andrei attempts to recall, or reappropriate, his childhood memories, the Russian poet Sosnosky's earlier visit to Italy, as well as Domenico's past in the West, in order to "heal" from these events, which means to accept his own history as well as Europe's past and turn them in a different direction. This condition is achieved in the film's final scene. After Andrei carries the lit candle across the thermal baths of St. Caterina, finally falling under the strain, a black-and-white shot of a boy with his mother's hands on his shoulders quickly crosscuts to Andrei sitting at the edge of a pond with his dog. As the camera pulls back, we see that Andrei's dacha in Russia is actually inside the abbey of San Galgano, as snow starts to fall and the dog is heard barking in the distance. The sickening present of the sick Andrei, and the reassuring child's past—conveyed in the detail of the mother's hands sweetly and firmly posed on the child's shoulders—finally reconcile in a third powerful image. In it, the decadent West and the exhausted Communist East come together in a peculiar synthesis that preserves both worlds, and becomes therefore "the chance,"—in Vattimo's words—or the occasion for an encounter between the two Europes.

What is striking is that the reminder of the "sickening beauty of Italy"—namely, the once-splendid cathedral—has no roof, as if to underline the fact that the West has been weakened but continues to endure in its ruins. Those very same ruins allow for the Russian landscape to nestle inside them. The West is thus in the condition of *Verwindung*. So, too, is the East. Once again the latter is represented by the dacha in the countryside, but this time Andrei is alone: no women or children are present, and there is no family to fill in the empty landscape. The composition suggests that the past cannot be recovered, nor can it entirely be left behind. Its traces remain in the dacha and the nude landscape, and together with the unroofed cathedral, they allude to a future where both East and West can be maintained and accommodated in their individualizing differences. The synthesis is ultimately a weakened synthesis, the future a weak utopia capable of preserving alterity.

Tarkovsky has said that the final shot of *Nostalghia* is "a constructed image that smacks of literariness: a model of the hero's state, of the division within him that prevents him from living as he has up till now. Or perhaps, on the contrary, it is his new wholeness in which the Tuscan hills

Figure 3.3 *Nostalghia*: Andrei and the Russian dacha inside the Italian cathedral

and the Russian countryside come together indissolubly . . . the conclusion is fairly complex in form and meaning."[9]

This explanation reveals Tarkovsky's ambivalence; he is caught between the yearning for what he calls a "new wholeness" and the desire to maintain both thesis and antithesis, what he deems "the division" in the hero between Italy and Russia.

Other instances in the film would seem to support the hypothesis of a new oneness. When Andrei visits the madman in his dilapidated house, Domenico mixes two drops of olive oil together to demonstrate that "one drop plus one doesn't make two, but a bigger drop." The same concept is reiterated by the equation "1+1=1" that is scribbled on a wall. But this tragically insisted-on desire for greater unity and total fusion is somehow contradicted, or rather deflected, in the concluding synthesis, which contains the remnants of both Italy and Russia. Ultimately, Tarkovsky cannot endorse normative Marxist dialectics, the outcome of which had been totalitarianism and had produced the oppression of people as well as the suppression of time. That mechanism had shown itself to be corrupt; the totalizing resolution of a new wholeness would reinstate a new cycle. This would eventually result in another catastrophe. Tarkovsky cannot therefore subscribe to a dialectical development in the way it had

been theorized and actualized by Soviet Communism. However, the end of the film propounds the idea that change can still be pursued as the result of a conflict of opposing principles, and dialectics is not to be renounced. Only a weakened reconciliation can be attained, though, one in which *both* a weakened West and a weakened East are preserved. This cohabitation, Tarkovsky suggests, lies at the foundation of the only possible unity, a unity to be redefined as maintaining, instead of totalizing, the world and therefore eliding the differences. Tarkovsky is thus finally able to overcome, maintain, and defuse the myth of dialectics in service of a vision of Europe where the historically opposing blocs can be together and distinct at the same time.

By envisioning such a possibility, Tarkovsky achieves another astounding result: he inscribes—or reinscribes—himself in the specifically Soviet tradition of dialectical montage he had once contested: "The idea of 'montage cinema'—that editing brings together two concepts and thus engenders a new, third one—again seems to me to be incompatible with the nature of cinema. Art can never have the interplay of concepts as its ultimate goal."[10] Almost contradicting himself, Tarkovsky seems to consciously align himself with Sergei Eisenstein in both "the form and the meaning"; the emotional and intellectual effect of the constructed synthesis on the spectator cannot be denied, and the same holds true for the metaphoric allusions so powerfully expressed in the final sequence shot.[11] We could say that in the end, Tarkovsky, too, finds himself in a condition of *Verwindung* when he is able to reappropriate and yield to his Soviet legacy.

At the same time, he also remains firmly steeped in the European realist tradition. In the context of the mode of cinematic realism, the long take—one single interrupted shot—has been identified as the cardinal strategy in its capacity to cover and recover the "truth" of the action in its entirety and allow for the spectator's full participation in the event. The shot length in *Nostalghia* is impressive, from the opening sequence, which lasts four minutes, to the climatic scene of Andrei carrying the candle across St. Catherine's pool, which the spectator endures for over eight minutes. In this climax, Andrei, increasingly weakened by sickness, tries to cross the now–drained spa—signifier of the wasteland of our civilization—by carrying a lit candle. As the candle is extinguished by the wind, he retraces his steps, relights the candle, touches the wall and starts again. He repeats the same actions, slowly, while trying now to protect the flickering flame under his coat. The camera tracks along with Andrei,

makes us feel his agonizing effort, the emotional burden of the promise made to Domenico to undertake that ritual; it pauses with him and finally gathers on what is now a close-up of the candle protected by his hand.

In keeping with how André Bazin has construed realist aesthetics, the camera is there to capture reality, to unveil a secret meaning hidden in the decrepit pool, the shabby sleeve and bleeding nose of Andrei, the dripping of water, and the blowing of the wind. There seems to be "truth" in the flame resisting the natural elements, in the candle affirming faith against the physical exhaustion of the faithless Andrei, who accomplishes nevertheless the strenuous task, and the camera is there to record this "truth." But rather than recover a transcendental notion of the Real, the insistent long take can but disclose how idealistic, even mystical, the supposed realism can be. It is no accident that the climatic long take stands alongside the quick juxtaposition of present-past, Tuscany-Russia, adulthood-childhood, which converges into the final montage. Thus, Tarkovsky exposes the idealism constitutive of realism, as well as the idealism that underlies a dialectical construction; in this way both doctrines are weakened in their use and the goals they are intended to achieve. Nonetheless, he consciously reinstates and employs strategies pertaining to both aesthetics and their different systems of thought. In so doing, he is able to retain them both and still realize a synthesis. Not only does Tarkovsky inscribe or reinscribe himself in the Soviet cinematic tradition, he does so also in the realist tradition of European cinema: *Nostalghia* can be considered a truly supranational film that advances the idea of a European identity that can be attained by preserving the distinctive traits of its parts.

While the title, *Nostalghia*, and almost the entire film seem to point toward the past, the last shot changes the course of the events as it is de facto a projection onto a possible future. Nostalgia becomes then the condition through which it is possible to actualize the weak utopia of Andrei Gorchacov, and Andrei Tarkovsky, for Europe. The term actually takes on a peculiar meaning in the film. According to its Greek etymology, the word is a compound of *nostos*, which means "return," and *algos*, which means "pain," hence its most common usage as the longing to return. But *nostos* can also mean "journey," which then could yield a different meaning: the pain of the journey.

It is in this specific exception that the notion of nostalgia acquires a new dimension, one that is consistent with its application by Tarkovsky.

In this sense, nostalgia indicates a continuous pain, one that is carried throughout life. In his reflections on cinema, Tarkovsky affirms how such a state originates in the past but is not binding: "To this inexorable, insidious awareness of your dependence on your past, like an illness that grows even harder to bear, I gave the name 'Nostalgia.'"[12] He further specifies that: "Nostalgia for us Russians is . . . a kind of mortal illness, a profound compassion that is not so much bound up with deprivation, loss, or separation as with the suffering of others, which draws you closer to them through an emotional link."[13] The statement explains how nostalgia does not imply the recovery of the past for Andrei but extends over to a continual condition of pain, which is precisely what draws Andrei close to Domenico, as the two men are in a state of ongoing mutual suffering. Instead of a regressive movement toward the past, the state of nostalgia becomes an affirming condition for a different future. If Andrei is searching for home, that home is not located behind, but forward, and his is a suffering for bringing the Russian and Italian homes together. For Andrei the nostalgia of *Nostalghia* does not refer back to a lost paradise—his lost childhood and his abandoned homeland—as much as it turns, instead, into the active condition for a new home: nostalgia produces a weak utopia for a new Europe.

In terms of a potentially unified Europe, and the specific role played by Russia, it is highly significant to examine how Tarkovsky's weak utopia of *Nostalghia* is grafted onto, yet still diverts from, the construct of the "Russian Idea." The concept, elaborated during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by Russian writers and philosophers, especially Nikolai Bardiaev, asserts the belief that Russia has a special mission to be a bridge between East and West. Tarkovsky had already presented the idea in the film *The Mirror* (1975), where he quoted extensively from Alexander Pushkin's passionate letter to Chaadayev of 1863, in which Russia was assigned the role of defender of the West and savior of Christian civilization against the Tatars' invasion after the schism of 1054.[14] *Nostalghia* actually seems to endorse Pushkin's words by having Andrei perform the ritual in place of Domenico; it also confirms the director's idea, repeatedly noted in his journal, of a spiritual, vibrant East capable of redeeming a materialist and corrupt West. This was a position many intellectuals would share during the Cold War; on the one side, there was the phantasmic investment of capitalist Western Europe in Central and Eastern Europe as the last repository of humanistic values and, as such, the last hope for societal transformation. On the other

hand, for the Center and East,[15] more precisely Russia, there was the attempt to carve out a distinct identity to withstand the homogenizing totalization of Soviet Communism and find in Europe an alternative imagined community to belong to.

Although Tarkovsky's vision represents a pre-*glasnost* position of resistance, the Russian state was able to shed its Soviet identity after the breakup of the Soviet Union, yet it was still in need of another. In 1995 the film historian Oleg Kovalov wrote the script for a film directed by Sergei Selianov entitled *The Russian Idea* in an attempt to retrace the concept in Soviet cinema of the 1920s and 1930s, interpreting the Russian Idea as the search for an ideal, transcendental state for the nation. Accordingly, he revised history and cinema under the banner of an ahistorical and essentialized utopia to the point of asserting, "It is clear to the unprejudiced viewer that there is no hint of Marxism in the film [*The Battleship Potemkin* (1925)]."[16] On the contrary, he viewed the cinema of Eisenstein as harking back to a religious utopia, a "messianic religious origin," in such a way that he proposed to read *Potemkin* through the Gospels. He dehistoricized history and removed any Marxist taint from Eisenstein in order to negate the realization of the socialist utopia in the Soviet cinema of the 1920s and claim that cinema, instead, is the realization of the utopia of the Russian Idea. In rejecting the historical occurrence of the socialist utopia, Kovalov defied and rejected the failure of that vision and bestowed an essentialist Russian identity on post-Soviet Russia. Whereas by 1995 Kovalov had witnessed the collapse of the socialist "experiment"—as it was called—as well of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, and had withdrawn into a no-longer identifiable land, Tarkovsky still speaks from within the Soviet Union, and from the unique crossroads of "stagnation" and *glasnost* in the early 1980s. Kovalov's absolute and regressive Utopia establishes a totalizing Russian identity that dissolves history and Europe from its imaginary, while Tarkovsky's weak utopia remains anchored in history in the attempt to graft a specific Russian voice in a common European space.[17]

In 1984, Tarkovsky decided not to return home to Russia and opted for a different home by defecting to the West. In life, much as in his film, he attempted to bring the Russian dacha with him in the form of the crumbling Italian cathedral and to create his own weak utopia. Indeed he chose a more explicit condition of exile than had been his own even in Russia where, as a dissident artist, he found himself constantly battling both the stifling society and cinema bureaucracy. Those circumstances

had fueled the myth of the suffering genius, martyr, and unheeded prophet he had come to embody. It was precisely that situation that nurtured the *persona* and cinema of Tarkovsky from the outset and proved capable of satisfying varied needs at the personal, national, and international level at a specific historical juncture. As a Soviet dissident, Tarkovsky had been able to carve out a condition of otherness for himself in Russia while simultaneously acquiring an international legitimacy because of his rejection of the cinematic and ideological dictates of Socialist Realism. As a result, the Soviet state embraced Tarkovsky, even as it continued to alienate him, because of the aura and prestige that his cinema could bestow on his native country. For these reasons Tarkovsky never had any trouble getting financial support in Moscow despite still loudly protesting Soviet injustices. He even earned the nickname of "the darling of Goskino" in the eyes of some of his peers because he enjoyed complete artistic freedom and his films were never banned.[18] Still, although the visually stunning work of *Andrei Rublëv* (1966) was shelved for six years, his films were not outlawed, as were those of his contemporary Larissa Shepitko. For its part, the West held a similarly contradictory stance: it broadcast his cinema as that of an *auteur* allegedly concerned with metaphysical questions and removed from contemporary historical implications, yet Western critics implicitly endorsed an indirect strategy of condemning the Soviet regime by celebrating its official dissident after the release of *Ivan's Childhood* (1962). In fact, *Nostalghia* was awarded the Grand Prix over and against the efforts of the Soviet jury panelist of the Cannes Film Festival in 1983. It also provided recognition of a crucial historical moment, namely, the onset of a revived Europeanism and pre-*glasnost* era that the film was unquestionably voicing. Tarkovsky was keenly aware of the fact that his film was part of his personal and global zeitgeist, his own exile within Russia and from Russia, as well as Russia's exile from itself and from Europe. He was unequivocal in his position: "Working all the time in Italy I made a film that was profoundly Russian in every way: morally, politically, emotionally."[19] His own exile was fostering the notion of a different way of belonging, one that did not implicate a return to nor an abandonment of the homeland, but rather integrated the disparate fragments into a new synthesis that could harbor differences.

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CHAPTER 4

UNDERGROUND AND THE BALKANIZATION OF HISTORY

EMIR KUSTURICA'S MAJESTIC *Bila jedom jedna zemlja (Underground)* WON the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1995, around the same time that the Federated People's Republic of Yugoslavia ceased to exist, having been officially partitioned by the Dayton Peace Agreement as Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and the autonomous regions of Montenegro and Kosovo. The outbreak of war in the former Yugoslavia lends a referential dimension and a sense of documentary immediacy to Kusturica's cinematic representation of the events leading up to it that are hard to resist, as attested by the many critical attacks made against the director, a Muslim Bosnian-Serb, following the film's release. Indeed, from the very beginning, *Underground* anchors itself squarely in the historical referent, a dimension that appears to have been erased from the contemporary postmodern condition. Jean Baudrillard, famed postmodern thinker, states in fact that the real has ceased to exist, and we have entered "the age of simulation," which is characterized by the "liquidation of all the referentials."[1] The sign does not refer to the real any longer, but has become a simulacrum in itself, which means that it bears no connection with truth, objectivity, or reference. History and the past are therefore obliterated, replaced by simulacra, in the dehistoricized universe projected by Baudrillard. *Underground*, however, stands against this formula: it engages with the historical referent and foregrounds the persistence of history, while simultaneously subjecting the process of historical production to a devastating and revealing critique. The film thus raises the issue of the nature of history in the postmodern era, which it

affirms to be neither ahistorical nor dehistoricized, but rather the condition for a reassessment of historical discourse.

Underground offers a unique perspective on history from the position of a historically repressed and suppressed Other. Until the end of the Cold War, Yugoslavia was part of the "other Europe," those states behind the Iron Curtain, this despite its special status and the considerable degree of independence afforded during Tito's regime. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the "other Europe" became part of a post–Cold War configuration where it no longer held the status of the officially designated, separate Other that had pacified the West during the fifty years of the Cold War. In the specific case of the former Yugoslavia, however, the Communist, totalitarian, collectivized, and atheist Other, has been replaced by a different construct, that of the "irrational, chaotic, bloody and primitive Balkans."[2]

Arriving directly from the Balkans, Kusturica's film takes issue with such a construction and demonstrates how the "other Europe" is Europe itself. It does this by rehearsing and restaging the genesis of historical development, one of the metanarratives of Western thinking in its Christian, Hegelian, and Marxist variations, showing that, while this myth of legitimization has been "weakened," it has not been completely lost. *Underground* powerfully deconstructs the process of historical production as construed by the Enlightenment, yet all the while acknowledging and grounding or regrounding the very same process as *post-histoire*, or "weakened" history.

The concept of *post-histoire* and the peculiar meaning that the term *weakened* takes on in this reading of the film must be contextualized within the broader conceptualization of the condition of "late modernity" as argued by Gianni Vattimo.[3] Vattimo offers the paradigm of *weak thought* or *weak ontology* to explain the status of postmodernity or, rather, *late modernity*. He argues that we are witnessing the end of *strong thought*, a concept shared with Lyotard in what he refers to as the master narratives of the West, such as humanism, history, progress, liberation, metaphysics, totality, uniqueness, and the nation-state.[4] For Vattimo these narratives have reached a point of exhaustion in the sense that they have been fulfilled and used up—but they have not entirely disappeared. On the contrary, in recognizing the crisis or failure of absolutes, these can be retained—not reinstated, though—so that they can be reformulated in a different way. Once we acknowledge the demise of these myths, we are able to see their lingering traces, which can eventually be recognized and

realized in "weakened" ways. There is no rupture with the past at work here, and therefore no recovery or nostalgia, but there is the acknowledgement of the past and a readiness to produce a different, contested, and weakened present. Like Lyotard, Vattimo posits *the end of modernity* as the completion and exhaustion of the project of modernity.[5] But unlike the French thinker, he opposes the disappearance or the obsolescence of the metanarratives of modernity and the consequent nullification of Western civilization.

This framework allows for a reading of *Underground* that contests but does not do away with the grand narrative of history. Rather, the film deconstructs and thus illuminates the process of historical production, and in so doing, it offers to rewrite history differently. Specifically, Vattimo maintains that the idea of history as progress has failed and has brought modernity to its exhaustion and its present condition of *post-histoire*.[6] By this he does not intend to break with the past, though, nor does he intend to affirm that a new history can be reinstituted, since that would simply reinstate another modernity in all its implications. Rather, he considers history in a weakened form, as a continuation of the past, but also as contestation and incorporation of divergent directions that bring to a different reformulation, ultimately to a return to history that is not so much a return as a different turn. This conceptualization provides the theoretical key that unlocks *Underground*'s dissolution of the modern belief in history as a natural, totalizing, and unitary process of constant linear evolution. Kusturica's film accomplishes this feat without affirming the extinction of the historical referent, but rather by rehistoricizing the process of historical production in exhibiting how history is manufactured while it is firmly grounded in the temporal, social, and political referents, at one time produced as a fabula, yet rooted in the real.

Underground consciously sets out to present a potent allegory of Yugoslavia from the aftermath of World War II to the bloody breakup of the Federated People's Republic, officially sanctioned in 1995, but still unresolved at the most basic levels of living. The film starts out as a fairy tale with the words "once upon a time" and is divided into three segments, each of which is introduced by an intertitle, "The War," "The Cold War," and, again, "The War." By employing the framing device of a fable, the film immediately announces the double track of its textual and ideological process. It grounds the fiction of the film in the historical referent of the Cold War, while it draws attention to the metafictional act that constructs the fiction. *Underground* is indeed structured according

to a model of "double encoding" that aligns real facts and fabulation, self-reflexivity and the historical referent (its apparent opposite), without ever neutralizing either of the two terms or achieving a unifying resolution.[7] This strategy fractures and fragments the pretense of a totalizing narrative by constantly intervening to contradict, surprise, and parody in a careful maneuver intended to draw attention to those contradictions and keep them open.

This duality is at work from the very beginning of the film, set in Belgrade in 1941, at the moment when the radio is broadcasting news of cooperation between the two Yugoslavias. Here the viewer is first introduced to Ivan, who will become his or her consciousness. He will be placed in the role of a Greek chorus and at the same time in that of a Godardian character who speaks into the camera at the very end. Ivan tries to hang himself numerous times without success in a parody of existential angst[8] that nevertheless reaffirms a sort of nihilism that is justified by the bombing of the city and by the metaphorical escape from the zoo of all sorts of animals, including tigers, chimpanzees, and geese, which roam blindly among the rubble. The liberated animals become a contrapuntal motif in *Underground* because they will appear again, first when they receive shelter from Ivan and later when they are hosted in the land of utopia at the end of the film. These animals evoke once more in comedic terms the wrath of God and the salvation of mankind on Noah's Ark through the film's double inscription, which aligns comedy and tragedy, epic tones and surrealist transgressions, the highest authority of the cross and the lowest praxis of a woman shaving her legs in a (post-modern) universe where desecration and reconsecration coexist in simultaneous counterpoint without ever neutralizing each other but affirming their dual presence.

The deconstruction of history as the grand *res gesta* carried out by noble men driven by the ideal to perfect mankind is undertaken at the very beginning of *Underground*, when the two male protagonists, Peter Popara Blacky and Marko Dren join the war against the Nazis more out of chance circumstance than conviction. Marko belongs to the Communist Party, and he enlists Blacky in the resistance movement when his friend is dead drunk. He steals weapons for the partisans but also makes a profit out of it. The nationalistic rhetoric of fighting for "his country" articulated by Blacky is astutely exposed by Blacky's wife, Vera, when she equates the country paradigmatically with "the whore," the actress Natalija who is pursued by both friends Blacky and Marko, and is

set up as the main metaphor for Yugoslavia. Through Natalija, the nation is ascribed the constructed essentialist feminine traits of subjugation to the winner, passivity, duplicity, and spectacle for the male gaze, while Vera embodies the opposite and complementary traits of the Madonna, mother and sacrificial victim.

These traits are both inscribed in the narrative and exposed through a ludicrous hyper-stylization, thus calling our attention to their construction. This whore of a motherland is also a fatherland, signified both by Blacky and Marko, the honest, ignorant laborer and the cultivated, manipulative leader, whose own complementarity Kusturica fully acknowledges by having Natalija say: "The two of you would make one good man." Blacky, who becomes a Communist by accident and a hero by mistake, is the idealistic partisan, a father and socialist worker in total awe of his master, Tito. Marko is the intellectual apparatchik, who will betray everyone out of greed and personal interest or, as he tells Natalija, out of "love for you," thus disclosing the love relationship through which the leader binds the feminized nation to the patriarchal phallus. If Blacky is himself the leader of the underground, he shares the same subaltern and passive position of Natalija as consenting victim of Marko the magician. For Marko lures Blacky and an entire nation into the underground and entrances Natalija with his words. Indeed, he gathers Blacky, Blacky's son Jovan, his own father, and a crowd of convinced Communist fighters into the basement of his house, first to shelter them from the bombs of World War II, and then to keep them there for the full duration of the Cold War under the pretext that the war against the Nazis is still going on outside and that Marshal Tito needs them to produce weapons. In a striking parody, what was created as a kind of Noah's Ark is heading not toward salvation but toward enslavement. Thus the underground space resembles Plato's cave, or the cellar in *Metropolis*, the 1933 film by Fritz Lang. In particular, Lang's adumbration of a totalitarian Nazism facilitates the equation with Communism, because enslaved workers work day and night in both films to amass capital for their owners. The central allegory of Kusturica's film, that of Communism representing the underground, an enslaved, frozen and separate Other, is indelibly asserted at this point, only to be verbalized later on in the narrative by a German doctor who will pronounce the final verdict: "Communism is like a cellar."

The underground workshop becomes a statement on the making of history as this construct has been envisioned in the Western philosophical

Figure 4.1 *Underground:* Marko, Nataljia, and Blacky at Jovan's wedding, underground

systems of idealism and dialectical materialism. History is neither unitary, evolutionary, nor emancipatory. Rather, it is constructed by repressing the divergent stories of the consenting oppressed, Blacky and the other workers, for whom time has stopped, while the official history legitimizes itself by authorizing the rapid consolidation of those in power, Marko and Natalija, and their grim maintenance of that power. In his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*,[9] Walter Benjamin has shown how history amounts to the history of the conquerors, who erase the ex-centric stories of the peripheries; in *Underground* these would be the stories of Vera; of Blacky's son and his newlywed wife, all destined to die; of Marko's brother Ivan, doomed by his trust, ignorance, and madness, with his monkey Soni; and of the countless nameless and faceless Communist workers who keep building weapons, blinded by the shadows on the walls of the cave. For the workers time has come to a halt; the idea of a linear evolution is dissolved into routine, repetitive, alienated chain work. Ultimately, routinization finally erases the notion of progress. It nullifies the promise of emancipation, thus undermining the progressive course of history, since the workers who set out to work for a new revolutionary government end up being enslaved by the same government.

On the surface, Marko becomes the totalitarian leader who bases his power on the shadow of a continuous war—the historical Cold War is to

be put in the position of that permanent menacing shadow. The film shows how this extended stasis—or duration, both in the sense of *durée* and endurance—also undermines the idea of progress, not unlike routinization. The revolution is shown to have failed by having frozen, divided, and fractured what was supposed to be the continuous spiral movement of history. The film makes clear that the thesis and antithesis of dialectical overcoming have not produced a synthesis. Instead, they are reinstated as separate tracks in the guise of a totality that represses and suppresses—and by the very same act constitutes—its own Other. No more powerful visual statement can be made about the dissolution of dialectics than the one produced here by Kusturica for a post-Communist audience.

In the film's allegorical configuration of the totalitarian regime, Marko is positioned as the leader. He alone rules, and he runs the underground in all its aspects, including robbing the workers of time, of their own histories, by having the hands of the clock set back. Well before 1940, Walter Benjamin, in his very nondialectical view of history, had discerned the motives for the betrayal of the revolutionary ideology on the part of politicians: "Our consideration proceeds from the insight that the politicians' stubborn faith in progress, their confidence in the 'mass basis,' and, finally, their servile integration in an uncontrollable apparatus have been three aspects of the same thing."[10]

Benjamin's words aptly illuminate the reasons why Communist politicians—and Marko—become traitors. For Marko never questions his automatic faith in progress, nor his "mass base" in the underground, as he becomes part of the uncontrollable Communist nomenklatura. He peeps through the hole of his camera into the basement to pry on the activities as well as the sleep of the slaves, who are totally unaware of being watched and supervised day and night. In this way, Communism is equated with the institution of the panopticon, as formulated by Jeremy Bentham in the seventeenth century and rearticulated as a power apparatus by Michel Foucault. Marko's all-seeing eye, the eye of power, is invisible to the workers yet constantly present. Likewise it speaks through the lyrics of *Lili Marleen*, which emanate in the underground from the invisible gramophone and loudspeakers that Marko periodically reactivates in order to maintain the illusion that the war with the Germans is still going on. Progress in the form of technology—rifles, tank, gramophone, and video camera—thus serves those in power. Kusturica unveils the workings of Communist totalitarianism and rejects the

notion that history follows a unitary path, that it grants universal emancipation and is driving toward a synthesis of opposites.

In highly significant moments in *Underground*, the relentless deconstruction of the myth of history is coupled with the affirmation and recognition of an act of fictionalization as constitutive of the historical process. Chronologically, the first opportunity for this is provided in the celebration of the Easter victory in 1944, when Natalija and Marko mingle with the exultant crowd in a real footage sequence, followed by the amazingly funny parade of objects that simultaneously celebrate and ridicule modernity: a telephone, a globe, a film reel, a camera, and a letter traveling around the globe, all gigantically enlarged. Later, marking the anniversary of Blacky's supposed death, Marko and Natalija unveil a bust in memory of their friend and partisan hero, and Marko recites one of his lyrical poems in his memory. On the same occasion, they visit a film set where the rape of Natalija is being staged by actors—an event the audience knows never occurred—as well as her eventual rescue and the heroic death of Blacky—though again we know that Blacky did not die in the ambush and was in fact "saved" by Marko, who then hid him underground. Also presented in this film-within-the-film is the final celebration of Marko for having saved the day on that occasion, thus becoming a national hero. Yet we know from the beginning of *Underground* that thanks to Marko Blacky was captured so that Marko could get Natalija for himself and that he had deliberately sabotaged the mission. Even more stunning is that the actors of the film within the film are the very same actors who play Natalija, Blacky, and Marko.

The constitution of history through fictionalization is further affirmed as another important event is constructed in the display of archival footage from Tito's state funeral in 1980. Finally, the point is brought home when, after Tito's death, at the beginning of the end of the Cold War, Blacky—convinced that World War II is still going on—decides to leave the basement with his son Jovan to join Tito's resistance and drive the Germans out of the country once and for all. The surprise—for the spectator, though not for Blacky—is that he finds himself in the middle of the production of a film that replicates his own story, on the same set already visited by Marko. Blacky takes this act of fictionalization for reality, and starts shooting, killing Franz, the Nazi leader, while the director and the actors argue about natural acting and the actors' working conditions. In all these salient episodes, history and fiction collapse into each other; the historical referent, the real past and the

fictionalized past, the real present and the fictionalized present, collide with the metafictional discourse, which seems to undermine all discourses and bring history to the point of disintegration. Yet the highly exhibitionistic self-reflexivity of the film deconstructs and fragments the whole process of historical production in order to illuminate that process and to show how history is finally produced and endowed with a specific meaning.

The making of the film-within-the-film raises the issue of the making of history, of how we gain access to historical knowledge. First, we witness random events during the occupation of Yugoslavia by the Germans during World War II—a party taking place, Blacky's failed attempt to marry Natalija, the Nazis' unforeseen attack, the sudden betrayal of Marko, who causes the capture of his best friend Blacky and then flees from the scene of the battle. Later, however, the film shot about these events constructs a totally different narrative, one in which Natalija, who represents Yugoslavia, is raped, Blacky dies for his country and achieves the status of a secular patron saint consecrated by Marko, and Marko becomes a national hero by defeating the enemy.

This enactment or reenactment allows us to witness the construction of history, which does not suppress the real referents but produces a narrative and a specific knowledge of the events that serves the nationalistic rhetoric of Tito's regime. In order to legitimize and sustain itself, the nationalist rhetoric requires the death of a hero, the violation of the homeland, and final victory at the hands of the new leader. Kusturica foregrounds the constructedness of history not to devalue the historical, political, and social referents but to make us aware of that constructedness. He makes us contemplate and rethink how we know history and in whose interests and to what ultimate purpose history has been written. He finally discloses that history is a fabrication inscribed in a contextual ideology whose goal is to legitimize and perpetuate the same ideology—in this case, Tito's Communist regime. History, as we know it, does not just happen; it is not the natural arrangement of objective facts but is produced as a selected, mediated, and subjective process in favor of a specific discourse, to support a specific power. We can only know the real through a system of signification for, as Hayden White puts it, "The facts are a *function* of the meaning assigned to events, not some primitive data that determine what meanings an event can have."[11]

Furthermore, the strategy in which the actors in *Underground* play both one role and two different roles—in the main narrative and in

the-film-within-the-film—suggests that historical agents also partake of the nature of fictional characters, in that they are, and can only be known as, functions of the meaning assigned to the events. Ultimately, by staging what never happened—the death of Blacky, the rape of Natalija, and the courageous intervention of Marko—Kusturica produces the parody of a teleological narrative of heroes accomplishing heroic deeds for the liberation of their nation, a narrative that we have become accustomed to recognizing as history, or rather, History. He shows how history was produced as an act of fabulation in the specific interest of Tito's Communist regime without undermining the historical and political realities he refers to. Ultimately, history is the product of a hermeneutic act grounded in the historical referents. Along the same line of thinking, Vattimo would say, "[H]istory is a history, both in the sense of *res gestae* and in the sense of *historia rerum gestarum*, and perhaps even in the sense of a 'fable' or a myth, given the fact that it presents itself as an interpretation (which demands validity until it is superseded by another interpretation) and not as an objective description of facts."[12]

In the sequence showing the victory of Easter 1944, Kusturica boldly inserts Marko and Natalija into the brief segment of archival footage that commemorates the historical occasion. This extreme act of self-reflexivity is not aimed at undermining the event and drawing attention to the artificiality of the medium, to the fictional nature of the narrative and to "the liquidation of all referentials" by tampering with them. The short piece is also the only instance in *Underground* where we see the real Tito; it therefore foregrounds the referent into the fiction at the same time that it suggests that the referent can be known only as fiction, not unlike the fictional characters of Marko and Natalija. Later on, the real footage of Tito's state funeral readdresses the same issue. The historical personages, among them Willy Brandt, Leonid Breznev, François Mitterand, Sandro Pertini, Yasser Arafat, and King Hussein of Jordan, become characters in the film we are watching, yet they never lose the stature as historical figures. The fact that fictional characters can be positioned as historical characters, and vice versa, throws light on the nature of history: we can only know history as a hermeneutic construction of the historical event. The double operations of self-reflexivity and historical grounding are not mutually exclusive, and the referent is not superseded. The self-reflexive questioning and the referencing of historical events are two distinct tracks in which history is conceptualized and known, a thesis and an antithesis of a dialectical process that do not arrive at a higher synthesis,

and do not have to. Of this historical condition, Hutcheon has argued, "There is no dialectic in the postmodern: the self-reflexive remains distinct from its traditionally accepted contrary—the historico-political context in which it is embedded."[13] *Underground* functions in such a nondialectical way. It exhibits its own constitutive mechanisms while it affirms its narrative as rooted in historical reality, and, in so doing, it reveals the constructedeness of the *grand récit* of history while nonetheless retaining the historical contextual reference. Through this nondialectical openendedness, it is able to produce historical knowledge, a knowledge that—it is important to recall—can only be acquired *a posteriori*, and is the only one to which we can have access.

The powerful ending of *Underground* sums up and readdresses the impossibility of a final and ultimate resolution for both history and the narrative. When Blacky and Jovan leave the cellar, Marko blows up the entire house and escapes with Natalija. At this point, the intertitle of the third segment of the film reads "The War," and we find Yugoslavia—which is Yugoslavia no more—in the middle of a new war. Through the repeated inscription of "The War," we realize that the third moment is paradigmatically in the position of the first, similarly called "The War." The first war was World War II, the moment was 1944; the second is the Bosnian war of 1992, and the country is in the same situation. In one simple stroke, Kusturica foregrounds the cyclical recurrence of history, which has not progressed to a further and better stage, but is merely repeating itself. In the meantime, Blacky has become a guerrilla leader who thinks he is still fighting the Nazis. He has gone mad like a Shakespearean hero, relentlessly touring the battleground in the desperate search for his lost son. He has turned into a totalitarian Fascist, oblivious to the passing of time, to the fact that there are no Nazis involved here, that this is a different war, and that Yugoslavians are now killing Yugoslavians. Through Blacky, Kusturica again associates the two totalitarianisms of the century with each other, suggesting that both are closed systems. Communism and Fascism stop time and arrest the development of consciousness.

In the meantime, Marko and Natalija have become war profiteers and try to sell arms to the best buyer, regardless of any political and moral conviction, which points to the Faustian corruption of the leader. Only Ivan, Marko's brother, will find out about the betrayal of Marko when in Germany, because knowledge seems to be acquired only from the outside or from a distance. He will come back to kill his brother, now aged and

immobilized in a wheelchair. In a visually effective scene, Marko and Natalija are sprinkled with gasoline and set alight. The wheelchair to which Marko is confined keeps obsessively revolving around a cross where Jesus Christ hangs upside down, while a white horse flees from this living hell.[14] Like the "the angel of history" that Benjamin so lyrically describes when contemplating Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus*, the face of Jesus does not look heavenward, but is turned in a different direction. While a storm blows in from Paradise, the wind catches in the angel's wings with such violence "that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress."[15] These words, a scream of rage against the break-up of Yugoslavia and the unacceptable betrayal of kinship, illustrate eloquently the images on screen. Both protest the impossibility of progress and painfully acknowledge the occurrence of history as a storm, a nondirectional, nonemancipatory, nondialectical turbulence. The secular belief in progress has finally produced the end of the world, manifesting the Apocalypse in the literal sense of the word, as a revelation or "uncovering" of the knowledge that history is no evolutionary movement in a forward direction.

In addition to this conclusion, Kusturica offers a second ending that similarly invokes the religious and secular traditions of the West. The last sequence of the film stages the afterworld, where all the dead are placed around a table—a composition reminiscent of Leonardo's *Last Supper*—sumptuously laid out in the open. Vera, the matriarch, presides over the banquet, Jovan and his newlywed wife are reunited, Natalija's brother is miraculously cured of his paralysis, Natalija is welcomed by Vera, and Blacky forgives (even if he does not forget, or so he says) what Marko has done. A herd of cows swims over to the promontory while Ivan addresses the camera: "With pain, sorrow, and joy we shall remember our country, as we tell our children stories that start like fairytales: 'Once upon a time, there was a country.'" At this point the earth trembles, a small island separates itself from the mainland, and the happy brigade is carried off upon it into the sea. A title superimposed to the last image reads: "This story has no end." In this way, Kusturica inscribes the end of the film in the realm of utopia, in keeping with its classical configuration by Thomas More in the sixteenth century as an imaginary island of idealized perfection. The Christian afterworld is thus hybridized and conflated with an idealized place that is a nonplace in the purest etymological sense. The

positioning of an Other place, in fact, foregrounds a nonplace for history: it speaks of the failure of the idea of history predicated on progress, whose ultimate goal fails to be realized. To posit a utopian elsewhere, in fact, reveals that there is no such thing as historicity, in the sense of an evolution destined to realize the perfect man. Vattimo suggests that ahistoricity is present in the revolutionary ideologies—Communism being one of them—and that it contributes to the dissolution of the myth of history. "The fact (noted by Gehlen) that the final condition sought by the radically 'future-oriented' utopias, like the great revolutionary ideologies themselves, reveals noticeable traits of ahistoricity, can perhaps be placed together with this same tendency to dissolution."[16]

Therefore, the happy island, which placidly drifts away from the apocalyptic storm at the end of *Underground*, makes the dissolution of the metanarrative of history visible and marks the notion of progress as profoundly ahistorical. By offering this double ending to his metacinematic historical film, Kusturica masterfully puts forth the two modernist views of the future as apocalypse and utopia at the end of *Underground*, and in doing this, he questions both constructions without opting for one final resolution for history and narrative. As the intertitle claims, the story has no end. Similarly, history has not reached extinction. Both story and history still exist and operate in "weakened" ways in a postmodern universe marked by different possibilities.

Underground foregrounds a constructive approach to history in a time and place, Western Europe and its supposed Other, which has witnessed the exhaustion of the grand narrative of history but neither its disappearance, in spite of all declarations of history's purported demise, nor its substitution by simulacra. The film points to a "weakened" history, or *post-histoire* as posited by Vattimo, who acknowledges the decline of this myth as it was constructed by Western modernity but sees in this decline the possibility of opening history up, keeping it alive, rewriting it differently. The way Kusturica achieves such rewriting in *Underground* is by demonstrating that history is not a unitary and emancipatory process destined to realize the perfect man; rather, it is first and foremost a construct, and then a construct tailored to the particular, privileged needs of a specific ideology. This constructedness, however, does not elide the referents but remains firmly rooted into the historical, political, and social realities of the time and place. The self-reflexiveness in which the film is steeped does not assert the autonomy of Art to the detriment of history; it engages, instead, with the historical context to produce the

Figure 4.2 *Underground:* The island drifting away

only historical knowledge we can access, one that takes place in the present, therefore always *a posteriori*, from a distance in space, or time, or both.

It is in the affirmative terms of "weakened" history or *post-histoire* that I speak of the Balkanization of history. In keeping with these concepts, "to balkanize" does not carry the negative baggage of fragmentation, chaos, and irrationality attributed to it by the Western construction of the Balkans. The weakening, deconstruction, self-conscious questioning of constructiveness, and the fracturing of a homogeneous history are indeed indicated in *Underground* as the only possible way to posit history—and not to proclaim its death—in a universe that has witnessed the impossibility of History. Kusturica's historical restaging through cinema shows how history may be configured today as a "balkanized" construct, as a "weakened" and "post-historical" construct, in the sense that the film exposes how the metanarrative of history is a construction that responds to the demands of power in a specific time and place. *Underground* suggests that this does not happen according to the principles of causality, progress, unity, continuity, teleology, and emancipation that constituted the modern idea of history in both the Hegelian and Marxist forms; rather, repetitions, duration, coincidences, "storm," and the lack of a leader are also historical phenomena, and ultimately historical knowledge

is an act of fictionalization and interpretation, though facts and events are firmly grounded and never underplayed.

In describing the treatment of history in *Underground*, "balkanized" here is used in a constitutive sense. That is, although the film shows the Western metanarrative insufficient, it acknowledges and offers a different way of conceptualizing history today. In this sense, "balkanizing" does not entail the idea of the Balkans as the Other of the West, as the place of chaos, irrational ethnic cleansing, barbaric primordial passions. Slavoj Zižek has eloquently shown this to be produced by the European gaze, maintaining that "the fantasy which organized the perception of ex-Yugoslavia is that of 'Balkan' as the Other of the West: the place of savage ethnic conflicts long since overcome by civilized Europe."[17] *Underground* disavows the dualistic fantasy of the Enlightened West and the primitive Other; it shows that the Other is the West itself by addressing and deconstructing the metanarrative of history produced by the Enlightenment and experienced by the Other—the former Yugoslavia—in the form of historical dialectics.

While in his interpretation of the film Žižek pointedly declares, "Far from being the Other of Europe, ex-Yugoslavia [is] Europe itself in its Otherness, the screen onto which Europe projected its own repressed reverse,"[18] what he really does is to reassert this duality by repositioning the former Yugoslavia as the Other ("Europe in its Otherness") and by specifically condemning *Underground* for its "very 'depoliticized' aestheticist attitude"; that is, for offering the Balkans as spectacle, as a place lost in a mythical history and driven by primitive passions that corresponds to the phantasmatic projection of the West. Hence he can finally claim that "*Underground* is . . . the ultimate ideological product of Western liberal multiculturalism: what these two films [*Underground and* Milche Manchevski's *Before the Rain*, 1994] offer to the Western liberal gaze is precisely what this gaze wants to see in the Balkan war—the spectacle of a timeless, incomprehensible, mythical cycle of passions, in contrast to decadent and anemic Western life."[19]

Although Zižek has brought welcome attention to these issues, he still misses the larger point in that *Underground* does not offer a "timeless" or "incomprehensible, mythical cycle of passions." On the contrary, it acknowledges how profoundly the "other Europe"—the Other, the Balkans—is steeped in the Western *grand récit* of history, and it consciously foregrounds that myth, deconstructs its process, and finally reveals the hermeneutic nature of history while reaffirming its persistence, rather

than its disappearance into a mythical past, inaccessible to understanding and knowledge. The film does not offer what the Western gaze wants to see, namely, "the 'underground' phantasmatic support . . . [that] provides the libidinal economy of the ethnic slaughter in Bosnia,"[20] which according to Zižek, entrances and ultimately pacifies the West. In *Underground* the West does not see itself as Other, but is confronted with the Other as itself. The Other returns the gaze and shows what the West presumably does not want to see—the West itself in its present Balkanized state. In this sense *Underground*, a film from the Balkans, is a highly political statement on the present condition of post–Cold War and post-Enlightenment Europe in its entirety.

In this sense the controversial reception of the film not only plays an important role in the construction and interpretation of its own meaning but is an integral part of its history. This is a story within a story that needs to be told. Following the Palme d'Or awarded to *Underground* in 1995, Kusturica and his film were charged with embracing a pro-Serbian stance; this sparked a heated debate within European intellectual circles involving Alain Finkielkraut, André Glucksman, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Peter Handke, Stanko Cerović, and later interventions by Slavoj Zižek and Dina Iordanova. In a crude attack aptly titled "Canned Lies," Stanko Cerović, a Montenegrin journalist emigré in Paris, accused Kusturica of having betrayed his Sarajevan origins and promoted Serbian propaganda at a time when Serbia was the aggressor in Bosnia.[21] This rests on the evidence that in *Underground* "the revolution is led metaphorically by a Montenegrin and a Serb, two archetypal Belgrade figures, who together represent the cliché image of Serb heroes created by nationalist writers."[22] It follows that all other Yugoslav nations are discredited to the advantage of the heroic Serbs, given also that two traitors to the revolution are identifiable as a Muslim and a Croat; the Croats are above all stigmatized as Nazi collaborators because they are shown welcoming the Nazis in the archival footage selected by Kusturica. With his article "L'imposture Kusturica," Alain Finkielkraut became the director's chief prosecutor; and, without having seen the film, he declared, "The jury at Cannes had honored a servile illustrator of the most blatant and daring Serbian propaganda. The devil himself could not concoct such a cruel outrage on Bosnia."[23]

A few years later, famed Slovenian intellectual and political figure Slavoj Zižek recapitulated the charges in terms of "overt tendentiousness in the way it [the film] takes sides in the post-Yugoslav conflict—heroic

Serbs versus the treacherous, pro-Nazi Slovenes and Croats."[24] But Zižek also provided a rationale for the favorable response of the film in the West by revealing how it perfectly substantiated the notion of Balkanism: *Underground* would prove the Western construct of the Balkan Other as a site of primitive, irrational passions and "ancient hatreds," in contrast to the rational, liberal and decaying West. Zižek seemed to have identified the reason for the success of the film in the West with festivals and audiences alike. And the film was successful not only in the West, as South African Nobel laureate Nadine Gordimer wrote in *The New Yorker*: "Emir Kusturica's *Underground* is a splendid masquerade of life triumphant, in brass-band bravura, through half a century in the birthplace of the avatars of war which used to be Yugoslavia."[25]

In an effort to finally assess the dispute and condemn Kusturica once for all, Dina Iordanova dedicated a thorough *mise au point* to the film,[26] summing up and completing the charges. First, *Underground* privileges and celebrates popular Serb heroes—Blacky and Marko—against corrupt Croats and other Yugoslav nations. Second, the film was shot in Belgrade, and "making films in Belgrade when you have the choice of making them anywhere else is taking sides. Kusturica had chosen to take the side of the aggressor." Third, 5 percent of the financing for this French-German-Hungarian coproduction came from Radio-TV-Serbia (RTS), regardless of Kusturica's allegation that the help consisted of lending studios and equipment to be traded for the right to broadcast the film on television. Even worse, a Serbian delegation, including the minister of culture, attended the screening and the award ceremony in Cannes. In Iordanova's view such elements stand as counts of indictment of Kusturica's involvement with the aggressor, a stance she unflinchingly calls "the Riefenstahl syndrome."[27] And last but not least, Iordanova invokes what she calls "the primordialist argument," reiterating how vitalism, vigor, and lust for life are posited as essentialized Balkan traits. Amorality is another such essentialized feature: The proof is that Blacky and Marko and Natalia have no morals well before joining the revolution; Communism cannot therefore explain their actions and has to be considered a mere "post factum." Ultimately, in perfect unison with Zižek, Iordanova concludes that the film "is not about Communism, it is about the Balkans."[28]

Again, these arguments miss the subtle underpinnings of Kusturica's film, as *Underground* is very much about Communism and history. I have tried to show here just how *Underground* conducts a pointed critique of the

nature of history and of history as a discourse of power. To do so, Kusturica focuses on the aggressors, at the time the Serbs of Serbia and Montenegro, as subjects responsible for the oppression, betrayal, and breakup of Yugoslavia. In fact, Blacky and Marko are clearly condemned at the end of the film, one as an ultranationalist leader, the other as an immoral war profiteer.[29] As signifier of the oppressor, Belgrade in Serbia would be the appropriate location, and not Sarajevo in Bosnia, which by 1995 had come to signify the victims. As to the pro-Nazi characterization of the Croats, historically Croatian secessionism was supported by Mussolini, and during World War II the very much feared Ustashi militia were Croatian nationalists. Finally, to shoot the film in Belgrade, Kusturica needed the involvement of the Serbian government, which could on its part profit from the exhibition of the film and the presence of its own representatives at the prestigious film festival of Cannes in the West, thereby possibly gaining international legitimation for the new Yugoslav republic.

Ultimately though, *Underground* is condemned for providing the Western gaze with the spectacle of a primitive, vitalistic, irrational, and amoral Balkan Other. In this respect Zižek and Iordanova appear to fall into the same kind of Balkanism of which they accuse many western critics and spectators. By dismissing the film on the grounds of Balkanism, they fail to grasp that *Underground* shows that history is a construction articulated by power in the service of power. The film does not endorse Balkanism; rather, it undoes that mode of thinking and provides ample evidence that the events are intelligible and therefore do not proceed from boisterous, lustful, irrational, and apolitical characters. Marko, Blacky and Natalja may be opportunists before the revolution, but they actively participate and consent to history and their own stories. It would be naive to see their amorality as stemming from their experiences under Communism. Would this not free the Yugoslav nations from their responsibility for their Communist past? The insistence on the Balkan Other implies a disavowal of history; to persist in saying that *Underground* stages timeless ancient hatreds for the gaze of the West disengages both the West and the former Yugoslavs from understanding and taking responsibility for the making—and unmaking—of their own history. It keeps firmly in place the attitude of "them against us," which safely repositions the Balkans as victims of an equally safe projection of the West onto the Balkan Other. This is what neither the West nor the Balkans want to see in *Underground*.

PART III

ODYSSEYS

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CHAPTER 5

POSTCOLONIAL EUROPE

IT IS PERHAPS PARADOXICAL TO SPEAK OF EUROPE, THE BIRTHPLACE OF colonialism and Eurocentrism, in terms of a postcolonial condition, and to argue, moreover, that the concept of postcolonialism is best suited to examining and articulating a post–Cold War Europe that is in the process of reexamining and reconfiguring its cultural and political identities. Yet the specific historical events that led to the end of the postwar bipolarism actually provide a lens through which contemporary Europe can be reconceptualized. Understandably, the designation of "postcolonial" in this instance is highly charged and operates simultaneously on different registers. It refers both to a periodizing concept and to a critical approach whose aim is ultimately to question the power structures created and imposed by Western thought. As a historical marker it applies specifically to the process of official decolonization of the former colonies of Western Europe.[1]

In light of a cultural studies approach, postcolonial theory also denotes a methodology of inquiry, a theory of power relations, which tries to expose the terms of such relations in order to identify possible sites of contestation or conflict and visibility for those who have been colonized and have been denied access to representation. In this sense, it permits a thorough critique of the Western structures of power and knowledge. Within this intellectual perspective, postcolonial theory assumes a heterogeneous task: it assesses the results and effects of colonization, but it also identifies continuing colonial practices; it investigates the consequences of a colonial rule while ascertaining the repositioning of structures of power. This is where postcolonial discourse intersects with neocolonialism, namely, the indirect economic and cultural control exerted by late capitalism, transnational division of labor,

cultural imperialism, and even tourism, as they replicate patterns once construed to justify political and military occupation. Some of the most recent European movies offer compelling accounts of different kinds of colonial relationships between "Europeans" and new immigrants. Examples include *Lilya 4–ever* (Lukas Moodysson, 2002), *Tornando a casa* (Vincenzo Marra, 2001), *La sconosciuta* (Giuseppe Tornatore, 2006), *Gegen die Wand* (*Head-On*, Fatih Akin, 2004), *Poniente*, (Chus Gutiérrez, 2002), *La petite Lola* (*Holy Lola*, Bertrand Tavernier, 2004), *Dirty Pretty Things* (Stephen Frears, 2002), *In This World* (Michael Winterbottom, 2002), and *Los novios búlgaros* (*Bulgarian Lovers*, Eloy de la Iglesia, 2002).

Ella Shohat draws attention to the fact that the use of the term postcolonialism—unlike neocolonialism—seems to erase the possibility of an anti-colonial or anti-neocolonial struggle. She maintains that "'neocolonialism' usefully designates geo-economic hegemony, while 'postcolonial' subtly downplays contemporary domination." The result of such a conflation is that "while 'colonialism' and 'neocolonialism' imply both oppression and the possibility of resistance, 'postcolonial' posits no clear domination and calls for no clear opposition."[2] For Shohat "post" signifies an interruption, a hiatus, the closure of a period, and consequently a movement beyond. I use the concept of postcolonialism here so as to include the colonial past and to avow the colonial positionings of colonizers and colonized. At the same time, though, the concept calls into question these very configurations in the sense that postcolonialism redirects the dualistic opposition of colonizer and colonized toward a movement of exchange and shifting positionings that ultimately are designed to empower the ex- and neocolonized and disempower the ex- and neocolonizer. Only by challenging the binary poles construed by Eurocentric thinking does the possibility emerge for the disempowered to move beyond a grid that locks them in the position of Other. Whether or not the poles of colonizer and colonized are reversed, the postcolonial subject materializes only when not fixed within a Manichaean opposition, and only then can a transformative shift occur. Films like *Lamerica* (Gianni Amelio, 1995), *La promesse* (Luc and Jan-Pierre Dardenne, 1996), and *Code inconnu* (*Code Unknown*, 2000) and *Caché* (*Hidden*, 2005) by Michael Haneke concretize how the "new Europe" is in fact traversed by relations of power that can no longer be channeled into the old dualism engendered by an essentialist Eurocentrism, while new configurations

may emerge from consideration of the ways in which Europe is signified outside of the Eurocentric tenets that produced it.

As there has been a steady increase in migration from formerly colonized empires, Africans, Indians, Pakistanis, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipinos are increasingly migrating to Europe and settling in once-distant metropoles. This previously not-so-practiced and not-so-visible process has rapidly accelerated in the wake of the collapse of the borders in Europe since 1989. By that time, the official decolonization of Western European empires was nearly complete, while another decolonization neared the climax of its implosion: the end of Communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe. Although this might not represent the classical model of territorial occupation, it speaks nonetheless of a form of control exerted first through forced consent and by extension outright coercion by a totalitarian regime. The fall of Communism created in the "other Europe," beyond the old Iron Curtain, conditions similar to those experienced by the ex-colonies in Africa and Asia, not to mention a similarly substantial and parallel migratory movement toward Western Europe. At the historic crossroads of 1989, the end of the Cold War, the decolonization of the former colonies, and the distinctive decolonization of the "other Europe" had intersected with the economic deregulation and the onset of a supranational Europe so as to redesign a postcolonial Europe.[3] Cinema has been at the forefront of such a change and has made those mutations immediately available by putting them on screen and disseminating them to local, national, and transnational audiences.

Given the new cartography of Europe, it is not surprising that the European Union (EU), which assumed its mantle in 1992, almost at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall, is perceived by many as what might be called a "supracolonial" undertaking as it attempts to specifically "integrate"—the word used in the official documents indeed smacks of colonization to the Euro-skeptics—the new nation-states of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe by means of economic and financial assistance. The assumed neocolonial stance is unmistakable in the media's use of the phrase "the economic bloc," which would seem to replace the older "Soviet bloc." The European Union continues to expand its roster of member states, currently at twenty-seven, and indeed appears to many observers as a colonial enterprise, only of a different nature: one that is causing an unprecedented migration from the outposts in Eastern, Central, and Southeastern Europe to the more central Western states.

Upon the entrance of the last two members, Bulgaria and Romania, on January 1, 2007, the long attentive European journalist Timothy Garton Ash observed, "On the first day of the year the silent empire has expanded farther. Its new colonies have celebrated their annexation as if it was a liberation, and it will be like that for the majority of Romanians and Bulgarians. . . . When has it ever happened in history? The silent empire is in fact a voluntary empire as well, a community based on consensus."[4] While acknowledging a general perception of Europe as empire, Garton Ash also replaces that very rhetoric with the idea of community, a community grounded on an act of will and the consensus of its members. These are the slippery terms that signify and account for a Europe that is painfully coming together.

The fact is that the opposition between Europe—mainly the European Union—and its colonial Others is being questioned and transformed by the heterogeneity of its new migrants, post-Soviet exiled, and minor and neglected autonomous communities that are all reshaping Europe. A postcolonial approach allows us to examine more closely not so much the Others of Europe, but Europe in its constitutive otherness; only by accounting for its own multiplicity and contradictions can Europe de-Eurocentrize itself and can its new hybridized interlocutors speak their voices. This holds especially true for the emerging trends in European cinema.

Central to the following case studies of European encounters is that specifically Eurocentric trope of the odyssey as the myth that, centuries after Homer, Dante made central to Western modernity and Western thought. It is, however, an inverted journey that takes the new Ulysses from the peripheries to the purported mainland on a trajectory opposite to the one sculpted by the great poet in his *Divina Commedia*.[5] Allowing that it was precisely Dante's understanding of Ulysses as modern Man that came to legitimize the voyages of discovery and conquest at the dawn of the Renaissance, what then would the journey from the former colony to the former empire produce? Are there still journeys to be made, and of what nature, from Europe outward? My aim here is to problematize and inflect the trope of the odyssey as a Eurocentric construct in order to allow other voices to speak, other sailors to sail off, so as to return images of a Europe capable of including and of being constituted through otherness.

A EUROPEAN AMERICAN DREAM: *LAMERICA*

Lamerica is first and foremost the odyssey of thousands of refugees from the mostly forgotten Soviet satellite, Albania, in southeastern Europe—and, however briefly, a former Italian colony—to Italy. As such it is the reversed journey of de-Communized Albanians fleeing to the West after the fall of dictator Enver Hoxha. The film takes on a poignant urgency because it was inspired by a particularly crude episode: in the summer of 1991, fifteen thousand Albanian refugees reached the southern Italian shores of the port of Brindisi, which is separated from Albania by a mere seventy miles across the Adriatic Sea; there, after spending two days spent in unbearable heat, they were gathered in soccer stadiums and repatriated in the midst of a political bashing campaign—formalized by the official complaint of the UN—against the reprehensible behavior of the Italian government. Tellingly, the film, a French-Italian coproduction directed by Italian director Gianni Amelio in 1994, went on to win the Golden Lion at the Venice film festival as well as the EFA in 1995, amid other important recognitions in São Paulo, Barcelona, Copenhagen, and Los Angeles, where it received the Independent Spirit Award in 1997.

From the outset the film foregrounds the multiple layers of its discourse and various splittings: it begins with archival newsreel footage of the arrival of the Italian Fascists at Tirana on one half of the screen; the film credits, the coproducers—Italy, France, Switzerland, and Eurimages—and the name of the director, Gianni Amelio, appear on the other half. This opening sequence speaks to different forms of colonization of Albania, specifically the military invasion of Mussolini in 1939, couched in the rhetoric of the "civilizing mission" that we hear as a voice-over, as well as the intervention of the director and of the many funding entities responsible for producing that distinctive imagining. The truth of the most "reliable" form of the representation, that of the documentary footage, is thus questioned.

The gaze of the director is also implicated; he has decided to shoot in cinemascope "to underscore that this was a 'foreign' gaze, not Albanian. . . . I wanted to immediately announce my belonging to another film culture."[6] The Western gaze is duplicated by the arrival of two Italian businessmen, Fiore and Gino, in search of an Albanian puppet director for a dummy shoe company, which they want to set up in order to pocket the subsidies made available by the Italian government. As the cynical Fiore says, this "enterprise" had worked in the past, in

Africa: once the money was granted, they had departed. This statement places Albania squarely in the position of a "Third World" country and multiplies its standing as Other. The Other as non-West colonized by a Western country (Italy) in the 1930s, as well as the ex-Communist Other of the Cold War, and the Balkan Other functioning as the Orientalist construct of Western Europe, conjure up the backward, the primitive, the undeveloped, or the "infantile," as Fiore calls the Albanians, that is the non-European.[7]

The screen images of underdevelopment offer a desolate landscape punctuated by the ominous bunkers that were built by Hoxha in the 1950s in the event of Western incursions. The scene is of a former labor camp populated by emaciated people in rags and fearful of strangers, hordes of refugees walking dusty, untraveled roads as they attempt to leave and thus further fragment their homeland. It is revealing that most of them speak Italian, the language of the former colonizer, and watch Italian television broadcasting the Italian version of *The Price is Right*—itself a colonial import of the American West in the European West. The new powerhouse of capitalism is foregrounded through the same medium that had disseminated Fascism fifty years before: the neocolonialism of capital and media is exhibited and condemned. Once the two swindlers find the perfect fake director in the guise of an illiterate Albanian, Spiro Tozai—who seems to have lost his memory, does not speak, cannot read, and can barely sign his name—the older Fiore heads back to Italy leaving the younger Gino to embark on a journey into the Albanian "heart of darkness."

Gino is progressively stripped of his Western insignia: the sunglasses, the watch, the jeep, and the suit, until finally his Italian passport is confiscated and he loses his Western identity; he joins the ranks of the many dispossessed Albanians who are desperately trying to leave and becomes indistiguinshable from them. In his new positioning of "equality" with the disenfranchised, expressed by an Albanian officer who says, "Nobody has a passport in Albania," Gino is forced to undergo the traumatic colonial experience and to enter the place of the colonized. His downward trajectory is mirrored by the apparent movement in the opposite direction of Spiro Tozai. After a symbolic death by the hand of some street urchins, who, recalling those in *Paisan* (1946) by Roberto Rossellini, steal the shoes of the old man and burn him alive, Spiro recovers—selectively—his memory, his speech, and his lost Italian identity as Michele Talarico. He had in fact been conscripted by the Fascists to Tirana and

later became a Communist prisoner ("worker") under a different name. Of the fifty years of the Cold War, Michele has no memory; he talks of himself as he were twenty and thinks only of returning home to his wife and newborn child. Not surprisingly, the Soviet totalitarian regime is here equated with stagnation, a frozen time, almost a nontime, as in films from the East discussed in earlier chapters like *Nostalghia* (1983) by Andrey Tarkovsky, and *Underground* (1995) by Emir Kusturica. There seems to be a conforming stance from Western and Eastern Europe alike in indicting and disposing of the recent, perhaps too recent, Communist past.

In one brilliant stroke, Amelio discloses further doublings. Spiro-Michele speaks Sicilian and defines himself as Sicilian, not Italian. This is of fundamental importance because the South of Italy has been perceived and represented as the Other of the industrialized North, a condition epitomized in a film well known to both an Italian and international audience, *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960) by Luchino Visconti. The Albanians and Spiro-Michele occupy the same unprivileged position in another respect: Albania is in the South of the Balkan South and functions as a further subcategory of Eastern Europe, which but multiplies its otherness.[8] The paradigmatic positioning is reinforced by pairing up *Lamerica*—the deliberate misspelling as "*Lamerica*" instead of "*L'America*" indicates the illiterate voice of the Italian emigrant—with Italy, as dreamland.

Figure 5.1 *Lamerica*: Spiro-Michele and Gino: The exodus from Albania

This is cleverly accomplished by Amelio when he presents us with the title of the film only at the very end, after Spiro-Michele says that he wants to be awake when he reaches "*Nueva York*." Such a move equates the Albanians with the Italian Southerners while establishing the utopia of an elsewhere for the immigrants. If Italy functions for the Albanians of the Balkan South in 1991 as the United States did for southern Italians after the World War II, this ideal place is however revealed to be a literal "no place." It can only be imagined in the middle of the ocean on board a ship by immigrants as they scramble up the bastions; European spectators who knew in 1994 that the Albanian refugees had been sent back would see it as a nonplace and the odyssey as having no destination. The deportation of the illegal immigrants was a step taken by the Italian government in response to a new European orientation of the time, that of creating an internal borderless area known as the Schengen Zone, from the name of the Treaty that would eventually go into effect in 1995. Italy was then implementing the new immigration legislation as a precondition to signing the Schengen Treaty; to become European, to be admitted to another mythical America, Italy—itself positioned as a "backward" nation in modern Europe—had to repress its Other, or itself in its Otherness.

The ways in which Spiro-Michele and Gino pursue their separate trajectories, Gino in the constitution of his identity and Michele in the reconstitution of his, gives new meaning to the notion of cultural identity as discussed by Stuart Hall.[9] In the case of Michele, identity is defined as an essence—something unique, stable, and unchanging that waits to be rediscovered, as if untouched by the vicissitudes of history. Michele recovers his silenced and repressed voice, the dialect of his "imagined community"; he eliminates the temporal dimension as he thinks back to himself at twenty, erasing his colonial history, personified in his double, the assimilated Communist Spiro Tozai. In this way he is able to establish a continuity with his Sicilian past, reappropriate his original identity, and impose "an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation, which is the history of all enforced diasporas."[10] The move is one of resistance by the ex-colonized; it plays—and historically played, as Hall has pointed out—a fundamental and critical role at the moment of the decolonization. Still, in rediscovering his Sicilianness, Michele remains nevertheless in a subaltern position; moreover, he is in exile. This condition, however, is paradoxically what allows him to rediscover his origins and construe an "imaginary coherence."

Amelio recognizes that Michele's recovered plenitude is merely imaginary and bound to clash with history and change. Thus, in order to sustain his ideal ego, Michele boards the ship thinking that he is going to America, not back home to Sicily. Identity as essence does not offer him an alternative; it resituates him in an unprivileged position. And indeed, the humanist Sicilian peasant, who has reconstituted the father-son relationship of Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) with Gino as son, is bound to die: he is old, and the wonderful stoic face of the eighty–year-old retired fisherman Carmelo Di Mazzarelli[11] is sculpted by the rifts of time, which he disavows even when Gino makes him confront his own image in the mirror, so that when he dozes off on the ship, he might well never wake up again. The film suggests, then, that the concept of an essentialized identity is no longer viable because it seems not to offer an alternative.

Gino represents, on the other hand, the possibility of envisioning cultural identity as "not an essence, but a *positioning*";[12] and this itself could be empowering. In fact, while Michele erases the subaltern Albanian Spiro and rediscovers his Sicilianness as a cry for reaffirmation, Gino is able to assume and simultaneously maintain multiple identities. At first he embodies the arrogant neocolonial West in the guise of a brash Italian businessman. In a second moment, he reveals to the now-rediscovered Sicilian Michele that he is from Sicily as well; the "son" Telemacus finally recognizes his "father," his repressed origins, and his past. But later on, as his passport is confiscated, he will look like and be one among the many shabby rugged Albanians. Gino's identity is thus constituted as a series of identifications, which are "the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past,"[13] and of the present as well. Unlike Spiro-Michele, who chooses one and "forgets" the other, (and nonetheless does not achieve any real agency,) Gino *knows* and is aware at all times that he is all of them: Sicilian, Italian, and Albanian. As he recovers the lost memory of his Sicilianness, he, unlike Michele, expresses no desire for that lost plenitude. Instead, by acknowledging that past, he incorporates it (or the traces of it) in its present. The same happens with his Italianness, which had put him in a position of power: his screaming "I am Italian" has no meaning now that he is positioned as a disempowered Albanian, and at the very end he appears completely mute, his silence a reminder of the silenced Other. Finally, Gino proves that "the 'other' is never outside or beyond us,"[14] but always already within. Not only was his Sicilian Other within his supposed

Italian unitary identity, but also now he has actually become the Other. If Italianness was the one identity he could and did accept, he now maintains other positions as well; what does it mean, then, to return home? Where is home? How will he be received in his homeland if he looks and speaks Italian like an Albanian? Will he be recognized as Italian? Will he identify himself as Italian, or Sicilian?

Gino's multiple positionings challenge the fixed binaries that Michele tries to reinstate by repressing his Communist other, Spiro. It is Gino who disrupts the colonial discourse of colonizer-colonized and shows the cracks of that discourse by revealing how the experience of the colonized is shaped by the colonizer—how both positions are transient, not fixed, but subject to the action of history, culture and power, subject therefore to transformation. Gino's final muteness might also signify this understanding, which was, for him, numbing.

How does this speak for the Albanians as Other? Are they, perhaps, fleeing a position of subjugation for one different only in degree? But as they are actually moving from one space to another, from the forlorn colony to the mainland, they are very much "the other [that] is never outside or beyond us" and requires to be seen. As such they are bound to disrupt the supposed homogeneous fabric of the colonial and neocolonial center. Still on the fringes, or rather in the symbolic middle of the sea, and mute, the film's last scene is a montage of nearly still photographs of Albanian children, women, and youngsters looking directly into the camera.

This moment can be related to an earlier event, when one refugee gives voice to the internalized colonial positioning and denies his own identity: "I want to marry an Italian girl. My children will speak Italian. I will change religion." First by words, then by silence, and last by being the object of the gaze, the Albanians seem to be repositioned into the space of the colonized. But as they are looking at us, we are reminded that what we are watching is and at the same time is not fiction. Such a dual consciousness leads to different results. One way (to bring the film to closure) would be to replace the Albanians with the Sicilian immigrants who sailed to Ellis Island at the beginning of the century and again in 1945. This reading would but reinforce the Orientalist construction of the Other as a projection of the Western mind, therefore speaking the desire and the phantasmic investment of the Occident. This is the thesis of a brilliantly argued essay by Rodica Diaconescu-Blumenfeld, *"Lamerica*, History in Diaspora,"[15] in which the author links Amelio's investment in

the Italian South—Amelio is himself from Calabria—with Pier Pasolini's similar belief in a primordial, mythical past that can be grasped only in the Italian South, the slums of post-war Rome, and the "Third World" countries that he visited. According to this view, "Albania is the shadow, the subconscious of Italy being raised to consciousness, mediating self-identity in an other."[16]

Ultimately, then, the spectator could deny and dismiss the presence of the Albanians themselves. By superimposing the faces of earlier immigrants onto those of contemporary mute, poor, and sunburned immigrants, we can both distance the question of specific Albanian emigrants and empathize in the abstract with the plight of a diaspora that has already occurred. But this would be to disregard and dismiss the challenge and the discomfort that these contemporary Albanians pose to the West, to Europe, and to Italy. It is the faces of the Albanians who return the gaze that force us to confront the contemporary historical referent; like a palimpsest it creeps in to our consciousness and becomes an integral part of the filmic text.

If fifteen thousand Albanians were repatriated in August 1991—those refugees that Amelio has filmed in his re-creation of the event—an earlier contingent of tw*e*nty-four thousand had found shelter in Italy earlier the same year, outside of the fiction. The Other is already within, physically and metaphorically: Albanians are already in Italy. In their role, they are also Sicilian, and this is precisely what requires scrutiny: the constitutive

Figure 5.2 *Lamerica*: The boat sailing for Italy

repressed Otherness of the Italian national imaginary. This construction does not erase the presence of the Other; it does so only if we do not want to see, only if we discard the paradigmatic association of the Albanians with Gino and focus instead on the conflation of the Albanians with Michele. It is Gino's multiple positioning that does not endorse the occlusion of the Albanian into the Sicilian; it rather disrupts and multiplies it, and it testifies to other possibilities, different configurations in space and history. We could thus approach the parallel standing of the Albanians with the Italian Southerners from the opposite direction. We would thus suggest not their deletion but their positioning within and among "us," a discovery so scary to look at that it would certainly be more pleasurable to see them in the place of the Sicilian Other migrating to America in 1945 and thus dismiss them as "not our problem," not the problem of Italy and Europe in the 1990s.

A Postcolonial Family: *La promesse*

An inverted odyssey from the ex-colony to the heart of the ex-colonial empire is the one that takes illegal immigrants from Central Africa to Belgium in Luc and Jean-Pierre's Dardenne's *La promesse* (1996). The film, a coproduction by Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg, and the European fund Eurimages, made a big impact at the Cannes Film Festival, where it won the directors' fortnight in the year of its release, and went on to record the same effect at more than thirty other festivals. The film is set in Wallonia, the Francophone half of Belgium, where French originally became the language of the industrialized bourgeosie while the working class kept a Dutch dialect, Flemish, in Flanders.[17] The partition of the country is relevant, as it undermines the fiction of the onenness of the former empire. Furthermore, the fact that Brussels, the working site of the European Parliament, is located in Flanders and the majority of the population of Brussels speak French further reveals how a "center"of both the previous empire and of the European Union is already split and layered from within. This situation is replicated and multiplied by the presence of differentiated outsiders in the city in the film.

In *La promesse*, Igor's father, Roger, rents apartments to illegal immigrants, whom he charges under the table, and confiscates their passports.[18] The important fact is that these *travailleurs en noir* are comprised of Africans, Eastern Europeans, and local people from the countryside

alike. In post–Cold War Europe, the subordinate position is equally shared by the new economic migrants coming from the ex-colony of Burkina Faso (former Upper Volta) and the closer post-Communist empire, as well as from the rural and underdeveloped parts of the country. If the center has thus been decentered, the fringes produce their own scattered center. Roger is a low-class, crass, slum landlord, whose provenance is never identified, but we may well suppose he must have sprung from the gutters of the housing complexes in which he shelters and harasses the immigrants. He periodically sends Igor to collect rent and perform minimal maintenance in the shabby and overcrowded apartments. When the illegal Amidou dies falling from a scaffolding, Igor, under his father's command, must hide him from the other tenants and police alike under pieces of cardboard; finally, he lets him die, but not before having promised him to look after his newly arrived wife, Assita, and their newborn baby.

The former colonized is repositioned in a condition of exploitation and squalor, on the fringes, represented not by the far-distant colony but by the close and equally secluded periphery of the prosperous West. The neocolonizer is a greedy capitalist Western adventurer, who is also *padre padrone* to his own son, whom he chains to an iron pillar to prevent him from helping Assita. Igor occupies different positionings, though. He is his father's slave, therefore himself in a position of subjugation and exploitation in the shantytown of his own Western world. But at the moment of his rebellion, he reverses position by chaining the father and taking away his glasses, metaphorically blinding him and thus showing how the master can be disempowered.

While Igor is watching Assita, dressed in her African clothes, kill a chicken and read the fate of her sick baby in the entrails, he subjects her to his visual mastery and ambiguous desire, while the perceived exoticism and primitivism of the Other are deliberately gendered in Assita, who at first comes across solely as the object of a male gaze. But when the baby gets sicker, Assita yields to Igor's offer to take her to the hospital; there she meets an African nurse who gives her her own ID so that she can take the train to reach a distant uncle in Italy. The nurse, once an illegal immigrant herself, now has a job, speaks French, and dresses in Western clothes, but she also performs for Assita a traditional ritual to bring her good fortune. Her presence and behavior thus point to the possibility of partaking of both cultures as she integrates her Africanness into the neocolonial capitalist Belgium. She stands as the embodiment of a dual

belonging by wearing both Western and African clothes and by similarly performing rituals from her cultural heritage while abiding by the demands of Western medicine in her literal and symbolic role of nurse.

For her part, Assita gradually enters her "new world" by switching from being robbed of her identity—deprived of her passport and hidden in Amidou's room—to an interchangeable position, where she identifies with a now-legal immigrant on the basis of the looks; this speaks an Orientalist position, which is, however, turned against itself because their black skin reduces both women to a sameness of which they are aware and make use of to their advantage. Later Igor repairs Assita's broken statuette, a symbol of her interrupted Africanness, which he has ultimately come to accept. In the final scene of the film, Assita turns her back on the train and walks away from the railway station with Igor following at a distance. She rejects the strategy of escaping to another country in Europe, moving from one Western site to another in an endless chain of diasporic positionings.[19] Her decision may have been influenced by the help offered by Igor, who has finally liberated himself from the yoke of his father and is ready to assume his identity and his responsibilities.[20] The Oedipal trajectory is completed, and a new family is constituted,

Figure 5.3 *La promesse*: Assita and Igor walking to the railway station

where Igor is both father and son and Assita mother and wife. Even if we are unsure as to Assita's disposition, both subaltern positions have been redefined and transformed: the ex-colonized from Africa and the powerless Western boy are changing their parallel status of disenfranchised by reaching some degree of mutual acceptance, a communal will to meet in a postcolonial Belgium.[21] Where Igor is able to carry out his promise to Amidou in the film, the "promise" of Europe to its immigrants continues to be the source of manifold confrontations all over Europe, notably in Belgium, which ranked one of the most racist European countries at the time of the making of *La promesse*.

ENTRE NOUS: *CODE INCONNU* AND *CACHÉ*

Code inconnu (*Code Unknown*, 2000) and *Caché* (*Hidden*, 2005), by Austrian director Michael Haneke, are concerned with a postcolonial Europe that is being summoned to confront its colonial past. Both films have been coproduced by different European countries—Austria, France, Italy, Germany and Romania—with the contribution of European and pan-European funds like MEDIA and Eurimages. Both have garnered international critical acclaim and festival recognition; if *Code inconnu* was nominated for the Golden Palm in Cannes and received the Prize of the Ecumenical Jury in 2001, *Caché* was lavished with Best Director, the Ecumenical Jury and Fipresci Prizes at Cannes 2005, four Césars in France, four EFAs, the Golden Spike at the Valladolid International Film Festival, as well as the Critics Prize in Australia, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. If such a wide consensus seems to have created a new *auteur*, the two films here considered have been selected because of their ability to mobilize contemporary issues that are distinctive to both France—where the stories unfold—and the new Europe.[22] Specifically, both films tackle the impossible present of Western civilization as epitomized by one of its capitals, Paris, in the encounter with the unwanted presence of its colonial others, be these the old Arab immigrants of its recent past, the diasporic subjects of second generation, or the new immigrants from Eastern Europe.

The complete title of the first, *Code inconnu: Récit incomplet de divers voyages*, (*Code Unknown: Incomplete Tales of Several Journeys*) points to an incisive and provocative summa of postcolonial Europe through the intertwined odysseys of disparate people. There is almost no link between the trajectories of several different characters apart from the

place that unites and divides them at the same time: a boulevard in Paris. The historic site of Western Enlightenment and colonialism is a crossroads of diverse languages: French, Malinka, Romanian, German, English, and Arabic as well as sign language. These are all maintained in the film and rendered intelligible through subtitles as if to foreground the multiplicity of origins of speech, which could become one only through a manipulative intervention directed at an imagined homogeneous audience. But the audience of this film is not homogeneous.

The film begins with a young deaf girl speaking in signs to other children, who are ultimately unable to decode the feeling or situation that she is trying to convey. A young man (Jean) who has left his father and farm is drifting. He has no code to enter the apartment of his brother's fiancée (Anne); he throws a crumpled piece of paper into the outstretched hand of a beggar-woman (Maria). A black young man (Amadou) tries to have him apologize to the woman; but the woman, who does not speak French, is deported back to Romania.

The camera films constantly at a frontal medium shot; the spectator has no escape, being made to feel the claustrophobia of the characters. Equally unsettling is that the black screen regularly brackets the fragmented narratives as if to underline that no connectedness can be gathered. Haneke clearly announces his will to mark a noncommunal experience among the characters. Or rather, the characters all experience the same rejection, isolation, and forms of racial hatred. But if their experience is a common one, it is also uniquely individualized and solitary. Their differences persist and are not resolved into a new whole, a new harmonized tapestry. Nobody belongs in the Paris of *Code inconnu*, yet everybody shares the same space, time, and alienation. How could they be a community?

The old farmer lives far from the city center; when his younger son disappears, he kills all the cows and is unable to speak to the older son, a photographer called Georges,[23] who was in Kosovo and is now visiting his Parisian girlfriend, Anne. As played by French star Juliette Binoche, she is an actress in a film titled *The Collector*: we first see her facing us, responding incredulously to a voice that could be God or a director or a voice-over that says, "I want to watch you die." Anne represents very much a dispossessed Paris and Western civilization at large, which are being sentenced to death: she wears drab clothes, looks glamorous only in a brief scene with make-up on, speaks French, and owns an apartment on the boulevard that she can access through a code. On the metro one day,

a young Arab harasses her; she moves and sits farther away; he follows her and spits at her beautiful face while he abuses her verbally: "The upper-class French princess does not want to touch a dirty Arab." An old Arab (Maurice Bénichou), who has witnessed the whole scene, gets up, takes off his eyeglasses, and addresses the young man in Arabic: "You should be ashamed of yourself." Nothing happens. Anne bursts into tears and hands back the eyeglasses to the old man, who had entrusted them to her. The young Arab gets off the metro, then jumps back on and says in French, "You'll see me again." Everything has happened; history is catching up.

The West, as embodied by Anne, has been defiled in her attributes of beauty, upper class, and civility. Her position is one of multiple entrapments, as woman and ex-colonizer: she is a victim as an actress and in the role she plays; she is confined to a secretive domestic space where we watch her endlessly iron, fold clothes, and watch TV; she crouches in her seat, disempowered, and becomes the object of the hatred of the ex-colonized, the young Beur man. In the final image of the film, Anne retreats to her apartment; a few moments later Georges, her fiancé, will be unable to use the same code and will have to leave in the rain. The French farm boy from the countryside, the Parisian girl born in the city, and the

Figure 5.4 *Code inconnu*: The old French Arab, Anne, and the young French Arab on the metro.

French intellectual are displaced and marginalized in the Paris of the twenty-first century.

Is the fate of the colonial immigrants any different? It is indeed the old Arab immigrant who intervenes on behalf of the ex-colonizer but speaks Arabic to the young Arab, who instead replies in French. The scenario is replicated later when an aged black African, whom we infer is making a decent living as a taxi driver in Paris, talks in Malinka to his little son, who answers him back in French. The film seems to suggest that the first generation of immigrants, those who most likely emigrated at the time of formal decolonization, in the 1960s and 1970s, have been assimilated into the city. Yet they admit to more than one positioning, as they hold the hybrid status of French and African, French and Arab, and speak both languages. By this fact alone, they acknowledge their colonial histories and claim their rights to be citizens of the center that their own presence decenters.

Both the sons speak French, but never the tongue of their fathers. They constitute the second generation, which was born in France, but their sense of belonging is no less ambivalent than that of their diasporic fathers. The African old man's second son empathizes in fact with the new post–Cold War Eastern European immigrant. She is the beggar-woman placed in a condition of total disempowerment as she is removed from the corner where she is squatting, and she has no French at her disposal, which underlines her alienated status as neocolonized. The young French-African who tries to make the farmer's rebel son apologize to her is dating only white girls, to the chagrin of his mother. The young Arab on the metro, on his part, performs an act of reversed racism against Anne, yet when he is rebuked in Arabic by the older Arab—a symbolic father—he disavows him and resorts to French and the warning of future violence. The dilemma lies with the second generation, the children of the historically and geographically displaced immigrants; they seem torn between two identities, two cultures, and feel compelled to choose. They shift from one position to another, from a supposed allegiance to the past to a "natural" assimilation into the present, being born in France. They do not realize that neither is acceptable. Their fathers show that their identity is one of negotiation, one that allows for both positions to be maintained and recognized. The code to this new form of cultural identity seems unknown to the second-generation immigrants, who remain displaced in the neglected suburbs of Paris.[24]

The discomfort engendered by the film in its dark envisioning of the Europe of the twenty-first century yields to an awkward last scene of all deaf children drumming their instruments in what is, finally, a long shot in an open space. This last image is structurally set against the opening one, but now the children are a crowd, not a few individuals locked in an indoor space. They have as maestro the young French-born African, who leads them as they play passionately, even if they are deaf and do not hear their music. They are creating a new language out of rhythmic beats: not a logocentric melody, but rather a fascinating cacophony of sounds. Tellingly, the maestro is a black conductor in dreadlocks; he is the Other directing a heterogeneous composite of children of multiple ethnic origins in what was once the metropole of an empire. If the whole film conjures up the failure of language and community, this last potent metaphor suggests, however, that a different code might be searched for and produced, a still inchoate idiom for a different postcolonial Europe.

Caché, made in 2005, pursues the search by tapping into the collective unconscious of a country that expressly wants to disavow its past and refuses to take responsibility for it. If the present is made of invisible walls, if these are deaf to the many voices and faces that surround them, Haneke digs in the hidden meanders of history and attempts to uncover the culprit for the lack of a common code. The film plays like a thriller in which both the protagonist and the spectator are in the position of detective, but, unlike in the classic whodunit, both are destabilized by the lack of a solution. The genre is consciously foregrounded in order to expose its failure and the failure of its results, namely, the uselessness of a rational mode of investigating and administering justice.

Caché opens with one continuous shot of a quiet street in the center of Paris. The camera is stationary: no movement, no soundtrack, only car noises and birds chirping. A cyclist goes by; a woman leaves her apartment in the distance. A male voice-over asks, "Well?" and a female voice answers "Nothing." Using a closer shot, the camera pans right to follow a man who crosses the road and then comes back to reenter the house. We return then to a static shot of the street and the façade of the townhouse emptied of any human presence. Suddenly, we see marks on the screen and realize that we are watching a video, as the female voice says "The tape runs for almost two hours." Only at this point are we shown the backs of the heads of two characters with whom we can obliquely identify as we are looking with them at the tape they are rewinding. They are Georges and Anne Laurent,[25] a popular TV book show host and his

publisher wife. From now on, we will be wondering whether we are watching a tape, which someone unknown leaves repeatedly in front of their apartment, or whether we are actually seeing the filmic reality of the couple. Not only that, we will be wondering who is watching and taping them, and from where, as we will be consistently disconcerted as we first watch the tape, but can identify with the characters only much later on, when they also will be included in the frame. The blurring between the taped version and the real, rather the fictional real, and the delay or absence of identification undermine the expectations and the confidence of the spectator. The procedure unravels the erosion of reality operated by contemporary media and technologies, a theme Haneke self-reflexively declares when, at a party thrown by Anne's publishing house, we hear a character mentioning Jean Baudrillard in the cacophony of the party's noise. Baudrillard's theories about how simulacra have replaced reality resonate with the concept of the loss of the real that the film foregrounds.[26] Haneke, however, does not celebrate this loss but constantly calls upon the spectator and attempts to make him aware and responsible for it. To this end, the director employs enduring long shots and long takes, which usually end with a slight panning movement, as he himself has theorized: "If each scene is only one shot, then, I think, there is less of a sense of time being manipulated when one tries to stay close to a 'real time' framework. The reduction of montage to a minimum also tends to shift responsibility back to the viewer in that more contemplation is required in my view."[27]

If these words echo the idealistic conceptualization of the one shot by film theorist André Bazin,[28] according to whom the unbroken piece of film can fully capture and recover reality, the sequence shots of *Caché* by contrast erode any sense of the real that the image is supposed to reveal and redeem by making the taped and fictional reality indistinguishable—more so thanks to the high-definition video—and by overtly exhibiting its constructedness.[29] Furthermore, Haneke calls attention to the spectator's status as a voyeur who is consistently acknowledged and compelled to share in what is taking place on the screen so as to take responsibility for it, in the director's own words. Indeed, responsibility is the key to Haneke's use of cinematic codes and spectatorial address, as well as to the distinct universe of *Caché*.

What is hidden in the film is the guilt of an entire nation, as embodied by the paradigmatic figure of the intellectual—Georges in the film—who has been considered a sort of national consciousness in the specific

Figure 5.5 *Caché*: Majid, the Algerian immigrant, and Georges, the French intellectual.

French tradition—suffice it to mention André Malraux and Jean-Paul Sartre—and as such is publicly chastised. In the narrative, Georges keeps receiving unsolicited tapes of his apartment and daily life. After a while, they are accompanied by childlike drawings of a head vomiting blood, and Georges starts to formulate hypotheses about who is possibly sending them. He seems to concentrate on Majid, an Algerian boy that his parents once thought of adopting and welcoming in their farmhouse after the boy's parents were killed in Paris on October 17, 1961, when the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) called for a demonstration in support of their war against France, and over two hundred Arabs were drowned in the Seine. Georges explains this hypothesis to his wife in a confrontation that emblematically takes place in their bedroom, a metaphor of the unconscious where George had pushed back his repressed secret. The fact is that Georges keeps part of the secret from his wife, but we see it unfolding in one of the tapes that he continues to receive: in it, a boy decapitates the head of a rooster with an axe, blood spurting all over him, while another boy is looking on in dismay. Who is filming the scene? This might well be Georges' subjective memory, but it is filmed in the same "objective" way the other scenes are, those of

Georges' daily life. Toward the end, a similar sequence will take us to the yard of a farmhouse, where a little boy is being forced into a car, tries to escape, but is caught again; then the car leaves while a couple reenters the house. Georges will finally reveal to Anne that he lied to his parents, as he had persuaded Majid to kill the rooster under the pretense that it was his father's will. When Anne tells him, "You told lies about him," Georges replies: "I didn't want to share my things with him. I was 6. . . . I don't feel responsible for it. . . . I forgot; my parents also forgot." We are witnessing events that originate in Georges' mind, yet they are filmed like the taped footage and the filmic real. The subjective emanation of Georges' consciousness makes it difficult to determine what is real, but it also indicates a different real. If we cannot distinguish between a mediated or videotaped reality and the real, if we have lost the real, Haneke seems also to reaffirm the power the media have to disclose a repressed past, a different real. Georges' memories are videotaped like external events, but they are the correlative objective of a guilt that he rejects at all costs. If our sense of reality is being erased by the media, the media can nevertheless alert us to a hidden real that we do not want to see.

Georges is convinced that Majid, whom he had never seen since the boy was abducted from the farm, is the author of the tapes, and that he is acting out of revenge. When he goes to confront him, the camera follows Georges toward a vanishing point in the background, as if it is penetrating the mystery, only to reveal a gentle, middle-aged man in a shabby apartment who welcomes Georges with the words, "I'm happy you've come." As Majid denies any knowledge and any responsibility for the unknown tapes, the solution of the mystery is also negated, in the same way in which the classical cinematic strategy of the camera moving into depth is shown to negate and unfulfill its supposed capacity for revelation.

The confrontation between Georges and Majid is one between the former colonizer and the former colonized. Their uneven relationship is mapped onto the geography of Paris; Georges lives in the well-kept thirteenth arrondissement, close to Rue Iris in the *cité*, and he leads a successful, though alienated, middle-class idyll, while Majid, who speaks perfect French, lives in the *banlieue*, Rue Lénine at Romainville, on the periphery of the city. This postcolonial universe recalls Fanon's words: "The colonial world is a compartmentalized world";[30] it is still divided between a center and the margins, and the Algerian immigrant is bound to live in the latter, in the housing projects. But it is precisely the presence

Figure 5.6 *Caché*: Majid: "I wanted you to be present."

of the margins in the center that destabilizes the previous empire and asks it to acknowledge a "forgotten" history.

The pivotal event in *Caché* occurs when Georges returns to Majid's apartment at the latter's invitation. This time the camera moves, first laterally, then frontally, in the opposite direction it had moved before, not toward the back, but toward the spectator, as it accompanies and precedes Georges. Once inside, in a silence with no hint of what lies ahead, Majid addresses Georges with the words: "I wanted you to be present" and then slits his own throat. Haneke has accurately staged the scene so that we are in the position of Georges witnessing the horrifying act.

The visual shock mobilizes our gaze on the exhibitionistic display of the violent act and undermines the need for development and coherence of the narrative. The mute violence displaces the necessity to resolve the mystery. The desire for an intellectual resolution is superseded by the stupor in which the spectator is left; it is an unbearable bodily sensation that seems to cancel out the rest of the narrative. The assault on Georges is an assault on the spectator. As a matter of fact, both Georges and the spectator are asked to assume responsibility for killing Majid, a suicide that is rather a homicide; the request that Georges be present, the earlier memory of Majid beheading the rooster per the instigation of Georges, and

the precisely devised mise-en-scène converge in pointing the finger against the culprit Georges, against France in relation to Algeria, and against the entire Western world as regards its former colonies. *Caché* turns at this point into a potent allegory of the West killing its colonial Other, that Other that Georges tries to keep *caché* or *hidden*—not so much from the world, but first and foremost from himself.[31]

Emmanuel Levinas' reflections on the other[32] illuminate the encounter, or rather the failure of the encounter, between Georges and Majid, the ex-colonizer and the ex-colonized, and, on an extended plane, that of France and Algeria, and often of the colonizing West and its former colonies. The French philosopher has identified our relationship to otherness in terms of a special understanding that implies knowing and possessing the other in an act of objectification. Such an act—in which we may well recognize the history of colonialism—cannot however account for the other in terms of its own subjectivity, or, in philosophical terms, of its "being." On the contrary, it brings with it a form of negation and violence: "Understanding carries out an act of violence and of negation. A partial negation, which is violence."[33] Levinas goes on to say that this partial negation can become total, as it can transform into the desire to kill. But it is at this very moment that the other vanishes: "Yet this power [to kill] is the complete opposite of power. The triumph of this power is its defeat as power. At the very moment when my power to kill is realized, the other has escaped."[34]

Levinas argues against such a subject-object relationship, against an I who "understands" the other in the sense of knowing and possessing and consuming it. The endeavor of the French philosopher is to ground an ethics of otherness, where the I—in a colonial context, the colonizing West—is committed to the other, takes responsibility for it, and meets it as a "face." Meeting "the face of the other"[35] means to develop what Levinas calls "a moral consciousness," not a simple act of knowledge, but an assumption of responsibility, which Levinas maintains precedes knowing and requires the acceptance of the other. This plea for responsibility seems to be the plea that Haneke asks Georges—and the Western spectator—to take on in *Caché*.

In the film, Georges "kills" Majid as a child by having him abducted from the farm and his family. As an adult, he "kills" him a second time, given that the Algerian, by killing himself, is merely actualizing what Georges had already done as a child and is doing again by his accusations, the denial of his own doings, and his indifference to Majid. In Levinas'

terms, Georges becomes the accomplice and has to answer for the death of Majid.[36] When Georges "kills" Majid, he reaffirms himself as the subject who objectifies and disregards the other, he reinstates his Western absolutist subjectivity, and he fails to meet "the face of the other," which is the essential requirement for the recognition of the other.

Georges fails to acknowledge his actions and to take responsibility for them even when Majid's son confronts him in his office after his father's death, saying, "I wanted to know how it feels to have a man's life on your conscience." Georges' angry reply to the accusation is redolent with his unwanted guilt: "I refuse to be incriminated by you. . . . You'll never convince me to have a bad conscience, because your father's life was a wreck. . . . I'm not to blame, do you understand?" At its core, *Caché* presents the stubborn refusal to assume responsibility on the part of Georges and France alike for its colonial past in general, and the Algerian war in particular; it may also express the reluctance to acknowledge the six millions Muslim Arabs who are living in France today.[37]

The issue of responsibility invests a globalized present marked by the attack on the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, and the contemporary surge of Islamic fundamentalism. This wider dimension is clearly foregrounded in *Caché* when Anne frantically calls her friends to find out about their teenage son Pierrot, whom she and Georges have forgotten. As Anne is set in the foreground to the right, the TV screen behind her shows footage concerning the occupation of Iraq, intertwined with an interview with the Italian governor appointed by Americans under a British command—this was the coalition that had agreed to the armed intervention in Iraq in 2003—then the map of Israel and news about Palestine and the newly appointed Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh. In its static visuality, its cacophony of sounds from the TV and the phone alike, the long shot compels us to oppose a bourgeois domestic universe desensitized to a world in shambles that the medium of television seems to deprive, once again, of reality. The Laurents feel indifferent to the many others; at the same time, the spectator is made conscious of his or her own indifference.

Such indifference becomes more relevant if we connect *Caché* to *Code inconnu* via the figure of the Arab Algerian. Not only does the same actor (Maurice Bénichou) plays both Majid in *Caché* and the old Arab that stands up for Anne (Juliette Binoche) in *Code inconnu*, but the two characters seem to voice two subsequent moments in the life of the same dias-

poric immigrant. Majid looks, in fact, like an older and more disillusioned first-generation immigrant who has finally decided to give up his life of difficulties in a housing project at the periphery of the center of the ex-empire. The big difference is that in *Code inconnu*, before he gets to the ultimate denunciation of his subaltern position as revealed in *Caché*, the Arab takes on his responsibility toward his French other, Anne, by defending her and scolding the young Arab who spat on her on the bus. On the contrary, responsibility is entirely avoided by Georges in *Caché*.

In the end, the film changes the question from who has sent the tapes to the guilt of Georges, as Haneke himself has stated: "The guilt of Majid [whether he sent the tapes] is totally unimportant, as it's unrelated to the guilt of Georges. The focus is his guilt."[38] In a reversal of roles, the victim is revealed as the perpetrator and the assumed victimizer the victimized. We can fully understand the implications of such a transformation in the wider context of contemporary France and Europe, where the many immigrants coming from the former colonies are perceived to be a threat to the "Europeans" who force them into a neocolonial status. Haneke points the finger in the opposite direction, toward the Europeans for disavowing any guilt and responsibility.[39]

Yet the film ends on a different note—or maybe not. It all depends on the spectator. The last sequence is another static shot, this time of a school's stairs during recess; teenagers talk, sitting on the steps or standing up; cars are parked in the foreground—no soundtrack, no human voice. A young man exits the screen to the right, and the credits come up. This ending gives no clue and leaves the spectator suspended and frustrated by the lack of resolution of the mystery, as is Haneke's intention.[40] It is, however, a proper conclusion to the real focus of the film, the guilt of Georges. Because Georges denies any participation in the death of Majid, and tries to forget about it by taking a pill and sleeping things off—as we see in the shot preceding the one on the steps—it is plausible that the last image of the film symmetrically repeats the opening one both in its parallel framing and the hinted ordinariness of things resuming their course. It may suggest that Georges—and the spectator with him—is repressing, again, the memory of Majid, and will instead go on living his life apparently untouched by the event.

Upon a very careful inspection, however, the attentive viewer may recognize in the final shot Pierrot, the son of Georges and Anne, and the son of Majid—who remains significantly without a name—chatting on the

lower left part of the screen. This act of recognition might very well reignite the thriller and the multiple questions of whodunit, who sent the tapes, why, whether the two plotted things together, and so forth.[41] What is important is that for the spectator—the Western spectator construed by the film—who is able to identify the teenager Pierrot and the young son of Majid together, the narrative opens up a different venue. The fact that the son of the ex-colonized and the son of the ex- and neo-colonizer seem to know each other and chat for long time, before Majid's son traverses the screen and exits to the right, foregrounds the possibility of an encounter with the Other in the center of an ex-empire, Paris, which is also a center of the new Europe. It is up to a new generation, the son of a participant in the French shame toward the Algerians, and the French-Arab born in France, to come to an encounter and seek a common code, however unknown still, for a postcolonial Europe.[42]

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CHAPTER 6

TOWARD A GLOBAL EUROPEAN CINEMA

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, EUROPE PRESENTS A highly mutated cartography. Gone are many of such familiar political icons of the previous century as the Iron Curtain, the Cold War, and the bipolarism of socialism and capitalism, not to mention the East-West divide. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked a new era—not the eradication of the past, but a transformation inflected by a new historical asset and the outbreak of globalization. The inchoate idea of a unified "Europe," which had led in 1957 to the regrouping of six countries bound to each other mostly by the necessities of the reconstruction after World War II, has evolved into a supranational enterprise comprising today twenty-seven member states. Since the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which established the European Union, the renewed and altered Europeanist project has in fact availed itself of institutions, legal provisions, and a new cultural politics geared toward the integration of its divided nation-states, its fractured economies, and its varied peoples. The latest addition of Bulgaria and Romania in January 2007 and the official talks begun in 2006 with Turkey toward a much-debated accession by the predominantly Muslim secular country in the EU, are moving Europe progressively to the East and to unprecedented questions about its future. Europe as geography and historical and mental construct is undergoing unforeseeable changes.

The reasons to join the new EU as the harbinger of a unified Europe have been of an economic, social, and political nature: these range from the need to enter and participate in new liberalized markets and maintain a primary role, to the call for modernization, a new visibility, and a suffered

legitimacy, to the compulsion to get away from a stagnant and implosive past into prosperity, mobility, and security.

There is another equally important reason to promote a unified Europe, the fact that only as a supranational entity can Europe meet the challenge of the new globalized universe that started to take shape during the 1980s. The agents of globalization—interdependent markets, multinational capital, cross-border technologies, labor migration, and people's mobility—have blurred borders and have required as interlocutor not the small and fragmented nation-states of Europe but an overarching organization that, always mindful of its multiple and varied member-states, might mediate on their behalf for mutual benefit. This is, at its core, the meaning of supranationalism: only a supranational Europe can become a global Europe. Such awareness underwrote the first visible marker of a new Europe, a common currency, the Euro, at once a supranational signifier and a new global player. Still, only if the supranational Europe envisaged by the EU can signify more than the economic power and the new, strong currency with which many outside observers, and inside Europeans, have identified it after 1989—only then can it become "Europe."

The European Union has addressed this deficit in Europeanness by undertaking a specific cultural politics. Jean Monnet, an early father of Europeanism, declared later on in his life, "If I were starting over, I would begin with culture." Indeed, the promotion of a European identity aimed at preserving old and new identities while trying to foster a common European character has become the catalyst of the renewed post-1989 Europeanism. The insistence of the Maastricht Treaty on "a common European character," "cultural diversity," and "the distinctive cultures of the member-states" has been translated into myriad initiatives. A privileged site for envisioning the new Europeanness has been the audiovisual sector, based on the ability of audiovisual media, and cinema in particular, to construct and disseminate ideas of nationhood and identity at the national, supranational, and global levels. The MEDIA Program, the Eurimages Fund, the Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production, the establishment of the European Film Academy, the EFA awards, and the Europa Cinemas network have converged in the attempt to design one common European space and forward a European consciousness.

Cinematographic coproductions have been at the forefront of the post-1989 Europeanism as they articulate the strategies and goals of supranationalism. As narratives, they are uniquely endowed to provide

images for a new European imaginary. They answer the new cultural policies set to promote a European cultural identity while reflecting the specific cultural identities that have been reconfiguring Europe. Coproductions translate the workings of a supranational enterprise as they comprise multiple sources of funding from different countries, as well as multinational creative and technical personnel. They maintain the national identities of the originating countries while simultaneously expressing a supranational, European belonging. They are directed toward local and national markets, as well as a supranational and global circulation. The critical discourse, success, and transnational validation conferred by awards and festivals upon the films I have investigated, *Nostalghia*, *Underground*, *Land and Freedom*, and *No Man's Land*, demonstrate how these films are highly significant in terms of a Europeanness that they envisage, even if—or because—such identity may be highly contested. These coproduced films mobilize configurations of Europe at one time heterogeneous and yet highly particularized as far as the distinctive cultural identities that inform them.

Specifically, I have identified a cluster of coproduced films that came out of Europe after 1989 that deal with the colonial past and the colonial ties between Europe, namely Western Europe, and its previous colonies, as well as the special colonial status endured by the former "other Europe," the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet republics subjected to a different form of colonialism, Soviet Communism. As migrants are entering Europe in unprecedented numbers, these films bring into question the one-to-one colonial relationship between the former colonizer and neocolonizer and the former colonized and neocolonized; in particular, they mark a shift toward the appropriation of multiple positionings that destabilize a clear-cut oppositional standing. As it has become increasingly difficult to identify center and periphery, *Lamerica*, *La promesse*, *Code inconnu*, and *Caché* engage with hybridities and positions that are no longer stable or secure. Coproduced films are hybrids themselves, and the new European coproductions of the 1990s seem to uniquely articulate, and most intensely envision, a hybridity that challenges the dualistic and monolithic ways in which colonial relationships had been configured.

The heterogeneousness that contemporary European cinema seeks to voice is highly contested; the endeavors of the former colonized to write themselves into the narratives of the old and new centers mobilize the ambivalence that "old" and "new" Europeans alike entertain toward the

ambitious inclusiveness of the Europeanist project and a possible redefinition of European identity. Western Europeans feel disempowered by the arrival of fellow new Europeans from Eastern and Central Europe, and the ex-Soviet Republics, as well as immigrants from Asia and Africa. Significantly, the French and the Dutch turned against their own governments' solicitations by aborting the draft of a European constitution in 2005. As talks are now being reprised, the fact remains that the first attempt at its implementation led to a breach of Western Europe within Western Europe, precisely out of the fear of extending citizenship rights to the new migrants. Yet, almost every household in affluent Northern Italy registers the presence of a *badante*, a caretaker for elderly people, coming from Latvia, Romania, Moldova, or Ukraine. On their side, these "new" Europeans feel like and are treated as second-class citizens, while, to them, Europeanness often means no more than economic sustenance. Most alarming is the appearance of Islamic communities, whose different otherness is lived out as an attack on mores of modernization, civil rights, and religious freedom, which Europe embodies and promises to its inhabitants. The fears aroused by a European enlargement are best epitomized by the assassination by a Muslim fundamentalist of director Theo van Gogh, in Amsterdam in 2004, because of his involvement in *Submission*, a documentary about the condition of women in Islamic societies scripted by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a naturalized Dutch citizen and parliament member of Somali origins.[1] The death of a film director is of special significance, as it underlies and further points to the power of the cinema to construe and circulate images that may promote new ideals for a community—in this case Muslim women—while threatening the established values of another community—the Islamic orthodox society. Yet Europe is progressively assuming the contours of a political entity, despite its own anti-Europeanism. The ongoing enlargement, the continuous consensus to and administration of European law, the reprisal of talks pertaining to a European constitution, and the tackling of two important issues like foreign policy and defense at the European level bear evidence of the project of a unified Europe.[2]

Those who set European cultural policies have recently become more aware of the increasing global framework within which they operate. This fact complements and extends the supranational dimension that European institutions and cultural provisions have addressed since 1989. As an indicator, MEDIA 2007, the program of support for the European audiovisual sector, has confirmed the will to further a European cultural

identity and favor a European citizenship, but it has equally recognized the need to cross the borders of Europe and "compete globally." A global appeal indeed underlies the desire to "to increase the circulation and viewership of European audiovisual works inside and *outside the European Union*, including greater cooperation between players . . . [and to] increase the competitiveness of the European visual sector in an open and competitive market."[3] Promotion and distribution have been prioritized by the MEDIA Program with the intent "to facilitate and encourage the promotion and circulation of European audiovisual and cinematographic works at trade shows, fairs and audiovisual festivals in Europe and *around the globe*."[4] Significantly, the statement identifies "cinematographic works" in particular not only as commodities that can be sold but also as instruments to envision and transmit Europeanness globally.

This global orientation has recently been made explicit by the slogan "European films go global," used by the European audiovisual ministers of the European Union at the Cannes Film Festival 2006.[5] The document acknowledges the special place that coproductions hold in the new context: "The circulation of films outside their originating country depends also on the existence of co-productions with other (European or third) countries; a favourable environment for coproductions (rare outside Europe) should be created."[6] Here, the EU recognizes that multilateral treaties, which have until now been largely confined to Europe, are needed to address a larger audience. Coproducing has always involved a transnational dimension, but now it is being explicitly sanctioned and promoted as part of the European Union's cultural politics.

Coproductions based in Europe but involving countries beyond its borders are expanding the reach of contemporary European cinema and challenging yet again our understanding of cultural identities and hybrid status. More recently, coproduced films coming out of Europe construe global odysseys and mobilize concerns that traverse geographic, economic, and cultural boundaries. For instance, *Indigènes* (*Days of Glory*, 2006, France/Algeria/Belgium/Morocco) foregrounds new diasporic identities that straddle cultures and different colonial positionings. Taking World War II as its cultural context, Rachid Buchareb, a French of Arab origins, reexamines the journey of Beur soldiers from the periphery (Algeria) to the center (France) that other colonial cultures have undertaken in the 1990s, literally and symbolically. On the other hand, *Vers le sud* (*Heading South*, 2005, France/Canada), by Frenchman

Laurent Cantet, complicates the issue of cultural identity through the journey of three female Ulysses and their quest for sexual gratification (this time from an affluent West to the former colony of Haiti in the 1980s). Gianni Amelio in *La stella che non c'é* (*The Missing Star*, 2006, Italy/France/Switzerland/Singapore) explores the contours of the new late-capitalist universe through the powerhouse of Asia and the eyes of an Italian laborer who travels to China. The familiar journey of the migrant from East to West is inverted; so, too, have the global frontiers shifted. In the process China has acquired a hybrid status emerging from its marginality as a thriving global economy. Finally, there is *Jade Warrior*, by Finnish Antti-Jussi Annila (2006, Finland/China/ Holland/Estonia), an unprecedented collaboration between Europe and Asia. It is the first ever Chinese-Finnish coproduction, as well as the most expensive to be filmed in Estonia, one of the new European member-states. Elements of popular culture from each country, the genres of kung fu and Finnish mythology, respectively, are combined and remixed to create what might be called a "global popular genre." More and more European films are the product of multiple sources of funding, entertain multiple identities, and are aimed at an increasing global audience and market. As they explore the specific layers of cultural identities that make up today's Europe, these films are also constantly redefining these boundaries, as well as our notion of what in fact constitutes "Europeanness." As a template for political dialogue, these coproductions provide a prism of opportunities for a global European cinema.

Notes

Introduction

1. In an anti-essentialistic move, Benedict Anderson fundamentally rearticulates the idea of the nation as an "imagined political community" that constitutes itself around acts of imagining shared by a limited and sovereign community. The concept can be criticized in terms of the supposed uniformity attributed to such a community, but it retains all its value by pointing to the subjective construction of the values, myths, and traditions that shape and bind a nation together. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). A revised edition of this seminal book appeared in 2006, which I did not have the opportunity to examine.
2. I specifically refer here to the idea of a "heterogeneous nation-state" as conceptualized by Ralph Dahrendorf ("Il futuro dello stato nazionale," *Micromega* 61.17 [1994]: 61–73) and the concept of "concentric circles of belonging" advanced by Anthony D. Smith (*National Identity* [London: University of Nevada Press, 1991]), which I will explore in the course of my argumentation.
3. The early Group for the Development of an Audiovisual Identity for Europe (DAVID) set up in 1988 and the later pan-European Eurimages support mechanism launched in 1989 and the many ongoing MEDIA (Measures to Encourage the Development of the Audiovisual Industry) programs in different stages of realization all bear witness to the unprecedented commitment to culture and identity.
4. The studies by Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History* (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1989), and Marsha Kinder, *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), best illustrate a national and international interface in reconceptualizing the notion of national cinema.
5. This is how Giulio Andreotti, minister of the new centrist government of Alcide De Gasperi, would refer to the Neorealist films, adding "how undignified it was for the new nation to wash dirty linen in public."

6. What I would call the *Don Camillo* case is especially revealing in its "repression." The comedic series employed the characters of a country priest, Don Camillo, and a Communist mayor, Peppone, who are engaged in a constant battle in a small village in northern Italy. The confrontation symbolically stages the political dilemma of the country at the time, that between the new forces of the Left and the conservative, pro-church, and pro-American government of the Christian Democrats, who had won the first elections of the new republic in 1948. These sparse data are more than sufficient to show why the series was discarded by the official culture, why it was not exported abroad—namely, to the United States—and yet was wildly popular with the domestic audience.
7. See Jean-Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), originally published in French in 1979.
8. I will be more specific in the course of the work as to Gianni Vattimo's formulation of what he considers the present condition of "late modernity" and its attributes. Here I refer freely to some fundamental concepts exposed in his major works: *The Adventure of Difference: Philosophy after Nietzsche and Heidegger*, trans. Cyprian Blamires (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*, trans. John Snyder (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988); and *The Transparent Society*, trans. David Webb (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).
9. See Edward Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community," in Hal Foster, ed. *The Anti-Aesthetic: The Postmodern Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 148.
10. I am referring to the now canonical text of Edward Said, *Orientalism*, the appearance of which in 1978 set the tone for a profound and still ongoing critique of Eurocentrism and its effects. However, I agree with Samir Amin's observation that Eurocentrism appeared for the first time in the nineteenth century and does not extend over the previous ages, namely, the Middle Ages, as Said instead indicates. See Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism*, trans. Russell Moore (New York: Monthly Review, 1989).
11. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994). Ironically, the multicultural and polycentric model indicated by Shohat and Stam to undo Eurocentrism can be effectively employed to assert Europeanism and therefore maintain a Western legacy.
12. See David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

CHAPTER 1

1. It should be noted that the Federated People's Republic of Yugoslavia was established in 1945. Tito, its undisputed leader, was a Stalinist, but he had built a strong independent base from Moscow. Thus, when he and his party were expelled by the Cominform in 1948, Yugoslavia continued to enjoy its peculiar status of being Communist and independent at the same time: it was and remained, however, under the constant threat of Soviet punishment.
2. Amin, *Eurocentrism*, xiii.
3. The quote is reported in Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1066.
4. Ibid. It is of extreme importance to acknowledge that the idea of supranationalism was intended to include the Soviet Union and other Western countries soon to be excluded from the first European coalition known as the EEC. This is expressed in the passionate words of the exiled Spanish minister and writer Salvador de Madariaga, chair of the cultural commission: "This Europe must be born. And she will, when Spaniards say, 'our Chartres,' Englishmen 'our Cracow,' Italians 'our Copenhagen,' and Germans 'our Bruges.' . . . Then Europe will live." Such a declaration from a marginalized outsider points to the intertwined role of politics and culture in the shaping of the supranational idea of Europe at its inception, which is precisely what is being revived by today's supranationalism. These words cannot but recall the similar fervor of Czech poet, president and convinced Europeanist Václav Havel in the new Europe of the 1990s.
5. Paul Hainsworth, "Politics, Culture and Cinema in the new Europe," in *Border Crossing: Film in Ireland, Britain and Europe*, eds. J. Hill, M. McLoone and P. Hainsworth (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, University of Ulster and British Film Institute, 1994), 8.
6. Marx Beloff, *Europe and the Europeans* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), quoted in Davies, *Europe*, 1015.
7. If we think of West Germany in terms of the separate nation-state formally acknowledged in 1952 with the blessing of the United States, the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 can be seen as a signifier standing for a new country and the new ideas signified by it: nation-state, democracy, capitalism, and American hegemony.
8. Davies, *Europe*, 10.
9. This is how the first line of the Treaty posits the goal of Europeanism. See the *Traité instituant la Commuunauté Economique Europeènne/ Trattato che istituisce la Comunitá Economica Europea* (Rome: European Economic Community, 1957), 3.

10. Victoria de Grazia, "European Cinema and the Idea of Europe, 1925–1995," in *Hollywood & Europe*, eds. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Steve Ricci (London: BFI, 1998), 20. See the antecedent argumentation as to the omission of culture in the EEC Treaty by Thomas H. Guback, "Cultural Identity and Film in the European Economic Community," *Cinema Journal*, vol. XIV, no.1 (Fall 1974): 2–17.
11. George Ross, "Confronting the New Europe," *New Left Review* 191 (1992): 51.
12. See Ross's *mise au point* in his "Confronting the New Europe," 52.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. *Trattato che istituisce la Comunità Economica Europea*, 3. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.
16. Davies, *Europe*, 1064.
17. Ibid., 1068. The United States has always posed as the leader of the United Nations, and as such has often imposed its own decisions, regardless of other countries' concerns and objections. They did so especially when they had just liberated Europe and felt the right to dictate their own terms.
18. Davies, *Europe*, 1117.
19. The fact that Spain was kept under Fascist rule after World War II was congenial to the United States, which feared the spread of Communism. Thus Spain came to be the southwestern bastion against the potential advancement of the "Red Scare" at the price of its own marginalization from the rest of Europe.
20. The film received global critical praise crowned by the Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and a nomination for the EFA in 2006. Revealingly, it was awarded the Special Prize at the Cottbus Film Festival of the Young East European Cinema, as well as the Audience Award, Best Romanian Film Award, and Transylvania Trophy at the Transylvania Film Festival in 2006.
21. Ralph Dahrendorf, *Perchè l'Europa? Riflessioni di un Europeista scettico* (Rome: Laterza, 1997), 35. The book appeared in its original version with the more revealing title *Warum EUropa? Nachdenkliche Ammerkungen eines skeptischen Europaers*.
22. *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro* is a Gaumont-Antenne Deux coproduction spoken in French and German, massively filled with intertitles and citations referring to European cultural heritage: Karl Marx Strasse, Pushkin, Goethe, Kafka, and Martin Luther Strasse, among others.
23. The sense of a leveling of history in the appellation of "Year 0," has almost become a trope to indicate the end of an era and the absence of a new beginning, as is witnessed in two films from the Balkans—from

different sides—that reprise the same title: *Serbia, Year 0* (2001) by Goran Markovic and *Tirana, Year 0* (2001) by Fatmir Koçi.

24. Here Godard plays with the Latin word *finis*, which means both "end" and "border." Thus he is able to refer to the demise of Germany, as well as the borders of Germany, erased and to be redrawn. In fact, the intertitle "Finis Germaniae" is followed by the very telling shot of a bulldozer leveling and digging the ground.
25. Maastricht is a village in the heart of Europe, located in the Benelux region, historically renowned for the tolerance demonstrated in matters of religion. The selection of such a site is therefore indicative of the new path that Europe would take. The meaning becomes more apparent if we consider that Maastricht is a small and unknown village, unlike Rome, which was the site chosen for the first Treaty in 1957; Rome was the capital and undisputed cradle of Western civilization. The choice of Maastricht instead points to the decentralization pursued by the new EU.
26. My primary focus concerns the development of the supranational idea ratified by the two official treaties of 1957 and 1992. It is, however, necessary to mention that in 1986 the Maastricht Treaty was preceded by the Single European Act (SEA), which established a single market and the abolition of barriers to trade and mobility. It is equally notable that the SEA was introduced at the time that *perestroika* was inaugurated by Gorbachev in USSR, and the new era of mediatization was starting to sweep the globe. Such a cooccurrence of political and economic factors is fundamental to the transformation of Europe.
27. Britain's membership of the European movement has been and continues to be a thorny question. The UK Government did not participate in the ECSC in 1951 and dropped out of negotiations prior to the Treaty of Rome. The reasons were both psychological and practical. Britain had not been defeated in the war; on the contrary, it had been a victorious ally of the United States. This led the Britons to think of themselves in terms of self-sufficiency. Besides, the country was still an empire entirely committed to the Commonwealth. But even when it lost that status, the attitude toward Europe was not favorable: suffice it to mention Margaret Thatcher screaming "No! No! No!" to protest against joining Europe in the 1980s. And even when the UK finally joined in 1973, it enjoyed a special status within the Union, revealing once again the unresolved position of straddling between the continent and its other special ties with the United States. And this is still the dilemma Britain is facing in 2007.
28. For the first time the new Union was admitting the de-Fascized and southern outposts of Spain, Portugal, and Greece. Furthermore, Greece was the first Eastern European country with no contiguous border.

These factors point to the new direction undertaken by the revived Europeanism.

29. Other countries are in different stages of consideration and evaluation; among them is Turkey, which has initiated official talks for a potential full entrance in 2021. The fact that Turkey is mostly an Islamic country has generated a continuing heated debate.
30. I quote from the "Treaty on European Union" contained in *Europe after Maastricht: An Even Closer Union*? edited by Renaud Dehousse (Munich: Beck), 1994, 220. The entire text of the Treaty I will be referring to appears in the appendix at the end of the book, 217–314.
31. "Treaty on European Union," 217.
32. As I mention above, the USSR was originally to be part of the idealistic project of a united Europe to be created after World War II.
33. Unfortunately, Gorbachev did not seize the moment; namely, he failed to understand that he had to formally acknowledge and declare the fall of Communism instead of attempting to reform it. This was a historical mistake that led to Gorbachev's own demise by way of the coup in 1999 and opened the path to the ambiguous figure of Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin, by contrast, seized the moment by climbing on the barricades in front of the Kremlin while shouting, "down with Communism." He was himself an apparatchik of the old regime; how could change come from him?
34. "Treaty on European Union," 217.
35. In 2007 the Euro is also the currency of Greece and Slovenia.
36. Ralph Dahrendorf, to mention a most illustrious critical voice, raises the issues of possible disintegration and ulterior separation. The monetary union is only partial, i.e., limited to only thirteen states. This has prompted Dahrendorf to say, "Not only is the partial monetary union an instrument of disintegration for the European Union, but it is also a maneuver which creates a 'nucleus' and a 'periphery.' The question of a recentralization of Europe, as well as the nature and development of supranationalism, are pivotal for the European project. See Ralph Dahrendorf, *Perchè l'Europa? Riflessioni di un Europeista scettico*, 15.
37. As George Ross explains: "Under the decision-making rules of 'qualified majority,' the four largest EC members—Germany, France, Italy and the UK—have ten votes apiece; Spain gets eight; Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, and Portugal three, and Luxembourg two. The qualified majority needed to carry a decision is fifty-four of the seventy-six possible votes. This system, baffling in its complexity, makes it impossible for the big EC members to unite and carry issues over the wishes of smaller states, while allowing a coalition of two large and one small members to block proposals." See George Ross, "Confronting the New Europe," 57.
38. Davies, *Europe: A History*, 1119.

39. "Treaty on European Union," chapter 4, 294.
40. Marsha Kinder, *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 14. For a clear and helpful look at the workings of micro- and macroregionalism in the new Europe, see specifically chapter 8.
41. Seville was elected the location for the International Exposition in 1998; Bilbao is now being celebrated as the site of the new Guggenheim museum in Europe, and Barcelona has become an expanded center of both tourist and business attractions.
42. See Michel Foucault *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 142.
43. See Michael Emerson, *Redrawing the Map of Europe* (London: St. Martin's, 1999), 41.
44. I am referring to Popper's powerful opus *The Open Society and Its Enemies Volume 2: The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx and the Aftermath* (London: Routledge, 1945). The author, a philosopher who fled Austria because of Nazism, launches during the course of World War II a massive attack against twentieth-century totalitarianism and the Western philosophers—among others Plato, Hegel, and Marx—whom he deemed responsible for the "closed" systems of Western thinking based on utopia, idealism, teleology, progress, and the "idiocy of reason." The fall of Communism and the subsequent events of 1989 and 1991 have validated Popper's critique of Marxism and Western reasoning from a position within that very system.
45. See David Morely and Kevin Robins, "No Place like Heimat: Images of Home (land) in European Culture," *New Formations*, 12 (Winter 1990): 3.
46. Gianni Vattimo reconceptualizes Heidegger and Nietzsche in the context of what he calls "the end of modernity." By this, he does not mean that modernity is over and has been replaced by a new order and a new ontology. This would reinstate a new thought, ultimately another modernity. Rather, the end means the exhaustion of the ideals of modernity, but not their disappearance. Such ideals are now being realized in a weakened form, one that still carries the traces of the "strong" ideals, but in a decenterd and "different" way, as the title of one of his books recites, *The Adventure of Difference*. Vattimo has developed his line of thinking in different works I am here quoting from: *Le avventure della differenza: la filosofia dopo Nietzsche e Heidegger*, 1981 (*The Adventure of Difference: Philosophy after Nietzsche and Heidegger*, 1993)*; Al di là del soggetto: Nietzsche, Heidegger e l'ermeneutica*, 1984; *La fine della modernità*, 1985 (*The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*, 1988); *La società trasparente, 1989* (*The Transparent Society*, 1992); and

Oltre l'interpretazione: il significato dell'ermeneutica per la filosofia, 1994 (*Beyond Interpretation: The Meaning of Hermerneutics for Philosophy*, 1997).

47. Václav Havel, the Czech poet and president, invokes the meaning of Europe as twilight, but apparently to the opposite effect, so that Europe can restore what it was and therefore see a new dawn. Havel comes from an ex-Communist country but—or precisely because of—the endured repression, he believes that the twilight inscribed into the name Europe is only "a time to articulate Europe's task for the twenty-first century. . . . That task will no longer be to spread—violently or nonviolently—its own religion, its own civilization, its own inventions, or its own power. If Europe wishes, it can do something else, something more modest, yet beneficial. It can become a model for how different peoples can work together in peace without sacrificing any of their identity . . . it can demonstrate that it is possible to live together with other cultures." Havel seems to share Vattimo's formulation of "the ontology of decline," by supporting a view of Europe that can become truly European and not Eurocentric. However, he appears to reposition Europe in the center by making it a model for the cohabitation of different cultures; for the formerly oppressed intellectual of the "other Europe," the idea of Europe still embodies the "humanism" that helped him to resist the "other" totalitarian Europe. See Václav Havel's essay "The Hope for Europe," *The New York Review of Books*, (June 20, 1996): 38–40.
48. Among the articulations of the concept of *Verwindung* present in the works of Vattimo, I quote from the most poignant definition of it, which he gives in a footnote in *The Transparent Society*, 89. The ways in which some of the master narratives do not disappear, as Lyotard would have it, but are rather renegotiated in contemporary European films will be addressed in the specific analyses of *Nostalghia* (A.Tarkovsky, 1983), and *Underground* (E.Kusturica, 1995).
49. "Treaty on European Union," p. 217 and Title I, article B, 218–19.
50. "Treaty on European Union," Title I, article A and article F, 218–19.
51. Ibid., 217.
52. Ibid., 221.
53. Masao Myoshi's cry against the "coherent" and "homogeneous" nation-state derives its relevance from the need to affirm an anti-colonial stance in a universe ultimately posited as co-opted by globalization; see his "A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State," *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, R.Wilson and W.Dissanayake, eds. (Durham, London: Duke UP, 1996), 82.
54. Jürgen Habermas, "The European Nation-State and the Pressures of Globalization," *New Left Review* 235 (1999): 46–59.

55. Jürgen Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays*, translated, edited and with an introduction by Max Pensky (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2001). The book was first published in Germany in 1998. Habermas analyzes the specific case of the European Union as possible embodiment of a postnational constellation in the chapter "The Postnational Constellation and the Future of Democracy," 58–113.
56. See Dahrendorf's previously quoted work, *Perchè l'Europa?Riflessioni di un Europeista scettico*, as well as a more precise formulation of the heterogeneous nation-state in his essay "Il futuro dello stato nazionale," which appeared in the Italian magazine *Micromega* (May 1994): 61–73.
57. "Treaty on European Union," Article 8 and Article 8a, 223.
58. "Treaty on European Union," Article 48, 235.
59. An important consideration is that the notion of citizenship here exposed does not revolve around the acquisition of political rights of the individual but is rather crystallized around the freedom of movement; this discloses a new perspective according to which citizenship would be explained and granted.
60. Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: Nevada University Press, 1991), 153, 175.
61. Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 798.
62. Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), 123. While Smith seemed to uphold a common cultural heritage as a binding effect for the new Europe (see his book *National Identity* [London, University of Nevada Press, 1991]) and the co-existence of levels of allegiance, he later questioned such a commonality and considered "the achievement of European unity . . . unlikely in the foreseeable future at the cultural and social psychological levels," on the ground that "there would appear to be little cultural and emotional space for a new Pan-European level of popular super-national identification to develop." (*Nations and Nationalisms in a Global Era*, 142, 143).
63. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: Norton), 82.
64. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation*, 103.
65. Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation*, 102.

CHAPTER 2

1. Cinematographic coproductions are not new to Europe and actually boast a long tradition: the "Film Europe" project of the 1920s and 1930s was the attempt to create a pan-European film production movement in the aftermath of the 1914–18 war. This earlier project has been attentively

explored in *"Film Europe" and "Film America": Film, Commerce and Cultural Exchange 1920–1939*, edited by Andrew Higson and Richard Maltby (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999). The authors note that the enterprise was to illustrate "the ideal of a vibrant pan-European cinema industry, making international coproductions for a massively enhanced 'domestic' market, and thereby in a position to challenge American distributors for control of the market—an industry fit for what some politicians envisaged as a United States of Europe" (p. 2). The project collapsed due to the introduction of sound, and persistent nationalist strategies, but coproducing became a thriving industry after another war, by the late 1950s and 1960s, when it seemed to promote a cinematic internationalism, as Rome's appellation of "Hollywood on Tiber," which dates those years, clearly indicates. By the late 1980s coproductions had become once again the financial option of choice, largely due to massive deregulation efforts, technological innovations, and the subsequent transnationalization of the audiovisual media.

2. See Catherine Fowler, "Introduction," in *The European Cinema Reader*, ed. Catherine Fowler (London: Routledge, 2002), 1.
3. Chantal Akerman in *Screening Europe: Image and Identity in Contemporary European Cinema*, ed. Duncan Petrie (London: BFI, 1992), 69.
4. See Mira Liehm, *Passion and Defiance: Film in Italy from 1942 to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 183.
5. Susan Hayward, *French National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), 37.
6. "French-Italian Film Agreement," October 19, 1949.
7. Anne Jäckel sustains the same idea: "Various attempts at creating a European cinema union in the post-war era failed. However, collaboration between producers from different countries flourished under the aegis of intergovernmental co-production agreements." See Anne Jäckel, *European Film Industries* (London: BFI, 2003), 7.
8. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith lucidly explains how "films were to be freely traded commodities like any other and free trade in films was written into the GATT agreement and the preparations for the Marshall Plan." *The Oxford History of World Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 436.
9. Ibid.
10. The case of *Paisan* (1946) by Roberto Rossellini offers a concrete example of this course of action. Shot only a few months after the liberation, the film was made with the contribution of American money, and it obligingly celebrated the Allies in their guise as liberators; they were equated with the Italians as sacrificial victims in the last powerful sequence in the Po valley. Soon after the elections of 1948 (but not

before the United States partially financed another benchmark of Neorealism, *Bicycle Thieves*, by Vittorio De Sica, in 1946), though, funds were quickly withdrawn from subsequent Neorealist projects. As the euphoria of liberation had receded and the conservative forces won the elections with the open support of the United States, it became clear that American hegemony would not underwrite a national cinema whose goal was in the end to challenge its presence.

11. This conclusion is also offered by Christian Thomas: "Overall, it can be asserted that coproductions contributed to the rebirth of the national film industries in larger countries after the war, where there existed some kind of state support." See Christian M. Thomas, *International Coproduction in Europe: a Cultural Perspective*, master's thesis, University of Southern California, 1990. I am very indebted to Marsha Kinder for bringing to my attention this manuscript, which confirmed some of my thoughts on the subject at the very beginning of my research.
12. Jean-Claude Batz, *Contribution à une politique commune de la cinématographie dans le marché commun* (Brussels: Institut de Sociologie de l'Universite' Libre de Bruxelles, 1968), 111. In Batz's call to arms, in the use of concepts like "the proper genus of a nation [*de chaque peuple*]" and "authenticity," the nationalistic strand is again invoked to protect national film industries without, however, any conceptualization of a European communal dimension.
13. The Motion Picture Export Association was created in 1946 to operate as a legal cartel representing the American film industry. In truth, the MPEA was specifically created in order to flood the European market in close connection with the Marshall Plan; its main objective was to organize the foreign markets so as to make them profitable for the American films. Its president, Jack Valenti, has been lobbying since 1966 against the European Parliament's adoption of television and film quotas.
14. "La position dominante acquise en Europe par le cartel des grandes enterprises américaines réunis au sein de la MPEA désarticule les secteurs de la cinématographie européenne, démantèle ses structures et atrophie ses enterprises." Batz, *Contribution*, 123.
15. Barbara Corsi refers to the idea of a "European cinematographic unification" articulated by Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli in the *Manifesto of Ventotene* of 1941. See Barbara Corsi, "L'utopia dell'unione cinematografica europea," in *Storia del cinema mondiale, vol.1, L'Europa*, ed. Gian Piero Brunetta (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 725
16. Giannelli's statement that "the key to the European union lies in cinema," could be taken as a prophecy of Cassandra that nobody really believed at the time. His voice would be heard only in 1992. See Enrico Giannelli, *Cinema europeo* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1953), 25.

17. French-Italian Film Agreement of August 1, 1966.
18. These categories are Andrew Higson's. See Andrew Higson, "The Concept of National Cinema," *Screen*, 30, no. 4 (Autumn 1989): 36–37. I indicate my utilization of Higson's categories through the employment of quotation marks.
19. It has to be noted, however, how Neorealistic aesthetics reworks an earlier tradition in Italian cinema as well as French Poetic Realism.
20. If we shift the focus from the site of production to that of consumption, it is worth considering the approach of Pierre Sorlin, as he defines or redefines national cinema in terms of the differing cinematic cultures produced by and around the films and times that he investigates. He proposes that "A national cinema might be what is projected in the picture-houses of a nation, and defined by the different networks which organize the production of 'national' pictures but also the distribution and exhibition of all kinds of films, domestic or foreign." While he broadens the idea of national cinema to that of cinematic culture and acknowledges the lack of fixity of audiences, Sorlin limits however his analysis to the domestic popular reception and is oblivious to the problematic question of coproductions and international reception. See Pierre Sorlin, *Italian National Cinema 1896–1996* (London: Routledge, 1996), 8–9.
21. There is no doubt that a reason for the success of *Roma, città aperta* was the melodramatic undertones that would rather link the film with the melodramas of Raffaello Materazzo than with the Neorealist aesthetics and ethics of *Paisan*. This would inflect the reading of the film differently.
22. See Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History* (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1989).
23. See Liehm, *Passion and Defiance*, 329.
24. I am referring to the concept of "weak thought" that Gianni Vattimo has elaborated in his fundamental work, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), as well as in later books.
25. For a discussion of R. W. Fassbinder, see Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*. For a discussion of the Spanish cinema of the 1950s, see Marsha Kinder, *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
26. See the seminal work of Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
27. John Hill, "The Issue of National Cinema and British Film Production," in *New Questions of British Cinema*, ed. Duncan Petrie (London: BFI, 1992), 10–21.

28. Philip Schlesinger, "The Sociological Scope of 'National Cinema,'" in *Cinema and Nation*, eds. Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (New York: Routledge, 2000), 27.
29. I am summarizing a widely held opinion through the words of one of its most convinced spokespersons: Dina Iordanova, *East Europe's Cinema Industries since 1989: Financing Structure and Studios*, http://www.javnost-thepublic.org/media/datoteke/1999-2-iordanova.pdf, Repr. from *Public* 6.2 (1999), 45–60.
30. Tim Bergfelder, "The Nation Vanishes: European Co-productions and Popular Genre Formula in the 1950s and 1960s," in *Cinema & Nation*, eds. Mette Hjort and Scott Mackenzie (London: Routledge, 2000), 139–52.
31. See Geoffrey Nowell-Smith's "Art Cinema" in *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, 567–75.
32. In a similar way, Mark Betz maintains that "the facts of pan-European coproduction during the same period [1960s] have most definitely fallen by the wayside in film historical writing." See Mark Betz, "The Name above the (Sub)Title: Internationalism, Coproductions, and Polyglot European Art Cinema," *Camera Obscura* 46 (2001): 7. While Betz's concerns bear on how economic and cultural cooperation disrupts the concept of national cinema, and thus shows the limitations of the concept itself, my aim is rather to explore how coproductions post-1989 may in fact represent a specifically new European, or pan-European cinema.
33. " . . . faciliter par tous les moyens de la coproduction des *films de qualité*, comportant généralement un devis élevé pour la réalisation des films qui devaient être d'une valeur telle qu'ils puissent servir l'expansion du film français et du film italien dans le monde" ("French-Italian agreement," October 19, 1949, emphasis added), cited in Catherine Sieklucka, *Les aides à l'industrie cinématographique dans la communauté économique européenne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), 83.
34. "Les autorités des deux pays envisageront avec faveur la réalisation en coproduction *de films de qualité internationale* entre eux et les pays avec lesquels l'un ou l'autre sont liés respectivement par des accords de coproduction" ("French-German agreement of June 24, 1955, Article 11, emphasis added).
35. "Accordo di coproduzione cinematografica fra il governo della repubblica italiana e il governo del Regno Unito di Gran Bretagna e Irlanda del Nord," in *Accordi di coproduzione cinematografica* (Rome: AGIS, 1968).
36. As reported in the documentary *The Last Mogul*, aired on KCET, October 24, 2001.

37. To be more accurate, we can say that it produced European cinema as it has been perceived from abroad: one single category that flattens the different European cinemas, spectacular films, popular movies, and "auteuristic" works.
38. The concept, which I have employed in the first chapter, has been formulated by Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991). See in particular the last section, "Beyond National Identity?"
39. For the whole discussion by Peter Krämer see "'Faith in relations between people': Audrey Hepburn, *Roman Holiday* and European Integration," in *100 Years of European Cinema: Entertainment or Ideology*? ed. Diana Holmes and Alison Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 195–206.
40. Peter Lev, *The Euro-American Cinema* (Austin: University of Texas, 1993).
41. Lev, *The Euro-American Cinema*, xii.
42. See "1989 L'année des coproductions," *Le film français* 2283 (February 2, 1990); "1989 Tendance Coproduction," *Les cahiers du cinéma* 434 (1990); and "Coproductions audiovisuelles et cinéma," *Images juridiques* 36 (1990).
43. Lange and Renaud, *The Future of the European Audiovisual Industry* (Manchester: European Institute for the Media, 1988), 67. See in particular the *1998 Audiovisual Policy of the European Union* for an extensive view into the directive and the directive's specific agenda.
44. *Explanatory Report on the European Convention on Transfrontier Television* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1990), 11.
45. Philip Schlesinger, *Media, State, and Nation: Political Violence and Collective Identities* (London: SAGE Publications, 1991), 141.
46. Alberto Melucci, *L'invenzione del presente: movimenti sociali nelle societa' complesse* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982).
47. *Treaty on European Union*, Title IX. "Culture," Article 128 (Luxembourg: Council of the European Communities, 1992). The treaty on the European Union can be accessed at http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/EU_treaty.html.
48. I am referring here to the Italian version of the program I consulted in the quarterly *aut aut* 299–300 (September-December 2000): 29. The translation is mine. The electronic presentation says that the program aims "to move towards a common cultural area; as such it supports artistic and cultural projects with an European dimension which include festivals, exhibitions, new productions, tours, translations and conferences. They are intended for artists, cultural operators as well as for a broader audience, in particular young people and those who are socially and

economically disadvantaged" (http://europa.eu.it/comm/culture2000/cult_2000_en.html).

49. "[Cultura 2000],"*aut aut:* 28. Participants from thirty European countries took part in the Culture 2000 program: the twenty-five EU Member States, the three countries of the European Economic Area (EEA), Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, and the two candidate countries, Bulgaria and Romania. As Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in January 2007, the initiative has been replaced by the new Culture 2007 program, which has confirmed "the role of culture in meeting the great challenges now facing the European Union," http:7/europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l29006.htm.
50. The statement by Jacques Delors, the French head of the European Commission at the time: "Culture is and always has been a cornerstone of the European tradition. It's nothing new for Europe to subsidize art—monarchs and rich benefactors have done so for centuries," was reported by Angus Finney, *The State of European Cinema: A New Dose of Reality* (London-New York: Cassell, 1996), 6.
51. See "Introduction: The French Exception," in *France in Focus: Film and National Identity*, eds. Elizabeth Ezra and Sue Harris, (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 1.
52. See Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History*, (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1989).
53. The war continues; it has even acquired an international dimension if UNESCO, the United Nations cultural body, voted in 2005 in favor of a cultural diversity convention (backed by France, Canada, and the UK) with the aim "to recognize the distinctive nature of cultural goods and services." France insisted on the right "to set artistic quotas since 85% of the world's spending on cinema tickets goes to Hollywood," while the United States lamented that "the 'deeply flawed' convention could be used to block the export of Hollywood films and other cultural products" (BBC, "Countries Turn Backs on Hollywood," http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/entertainment/4360496.stm).
54. A margin of error has to be considered when using these dates, since different sources tend to indicate slightly different years for the implementation of the new mechanisms. When the actual documents were not available, I mainly referred to André Lange and Jean-Luc Renaud, *The Future of the European Audiovisual Industry* (Manchester: European Institute for the Media, 1988); Karen Siune and Wolfang Truetzschler, eds. *Dynamics of Media Politics: Broadcast and Electronic Media in Western Europe* (London: Sage, 1992); and Jürgen Becker and Manfred Rehbinder, eds. *La Coproduction Europeénne de Cinéma et de Télévision*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1990).

55. Initiatives under the MEDIA umbrella have multiplied and have come to bear upon a wide range of subjects, like the cooperation and exchange of expertise between universities; the implementation of film schools, training institutes, and businesses; the creation of pan-European television channels like *Arte* and *Euronews*; special broadcasting for children; the erection of new multiplexes; the institution of special awards; the promotion of festivals; the launching of digital multichannel packages; and brand new projects in digital transmission. The European Union Media Prize was created in 2000 for "a work that received support under the MEDIA Programme, was distributed in the largest Media-participating countries, and sold the greatest number of places." The award went to *East is East*, by Damien O'Donnell, in 2000, and to *Une liason pornographique*, by Frederic Fonteyne, in 2001. Digital multichannel packages were launched in 1998 in Germany (Première), Belgium (Canal Plus), Spain (Canal Satellite and Via Digital), the UK (BskyB), Italy (Canale piú), and in the Netherlands and Scandinavia (Canal +/Telenor). New projects like FLASH TV, CINENET, and CYBER CINEMA were also undertaken. Of these projects, "CYBER CINEMA is a Babelberg Eureopean Audiovisual Centre project which aims to set up a network of electronically-controlled cinema screens throughout the small towns and suburbs of Europe. These will be programmed by satellite from Babelsberg, which will provide films either in original version, dubbed or subtitled in all European languages." *1998 Audiovisual Policy of the European Union* (Brussels: European Commission), 32.
56. See Ziva Verdir, "Securing a European Audiovisual Future," *Slovenia News*. http:// slonews.sta.si/index.php-id=19738.
57. Ibid.
58. As a matter of fact, the MEDIA program has created the European Coordination of Film Festivals (ECFF), which is a network of 250 audiovisual festivals in Europe whose mission is "the promotion and circulation of the diversity of the European moving image." http://www.eurofilmfest.org.
59. See Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 103–4.
60. See the *Explanatory Memorandum to the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and the Council concerning the implementation of a programme of support for the European visual sector (MEDIA 2007)*, Brussels: European Commission, July 14, 2004, p. 2.
61. European Audiovisual Observatory, *Public Support for the International Promotion of European Films*, February 2006, 10.
62. Jäckel, *European Film Industries*, 83.

63. The EFA awards are also known as FELIX awards, from the name of the trophy from 1988 to 1996. In 1997 the awards initiative was relaunched, but the statuette was not renamed.
64. These works offer the more fertile terrain for a reconfiguration of contemporary Europe, but complete discussions of all these films are beyond the scope of this project.
65. Jaromil Jireš, *Eurimages News* 14 (April 1997): 5.
66. The UK joined in 1993 only to withdraw in 1997 amid the widespread disapproval of British and European producers. At the time, indeed, one of the requirements to access the fund was that the film be shot in the language of one of the members, which meant that the UK was able to secure English-speaking productions. Quickly, Eurimages dropped the language restriction so that international export and bigger markets would not be affected, but the UK had manifested once again its estrangement from the European project.
67. See Toby Miller, Nitin Govil, John McMurria, Richard Maxwell and Ting Wang, *Global Hollywood 2* (London: BFI, 2005), 187.
68. Today the fund comprises thirty-three member states, the latest of them being Lithuania, and is open to non-European minor partners. Since its inception it has helped produce 1,025 full-length feature films and documentaries, many of which have received awards like the EFA, Palm d'Or, Golden Lion, Golden Bear, Oscar, and Golden Globe. Many titles come to mind: Xavier Koller's *Reise der Hoffnung* (*Journey of Hope*, 1990, Switzerland/UK), Theo Angelopoulos' *To Vlemma tou Odyssea* (*Ulysses' Gaze*, 1991, Greece/France/Italy/Germany/UK), Jaco von Dormael's *Le huitième jour* (*The Eighth Day*, 1996, Belgium/France/UK) and *Toto le héros* (1991, France/ Belgium/ Germany), Lars von Trier's *Zentropa* (*Europa*, 1991, Denmark/Sweden/France/Germany) and *Breaking the Waves* (1996, Denmark/Sweden/France/Netherlands/Italy), Marlene Gorris' *Antonia's Line* (1995, Netherlands/Belgium/UK), Pavel Chukhrai's *Vor* (*The Thief*, 1997, France/Russia), Jan Sverák's *Kolya* (1994, Czech Republic/France), Alecsandr Sokurov *Mat i syn* (*Mother and Son*, 1997, Germany/Russia), Peter Greenaway's *The Pillow Book* (1996, France/UK/Netherlands), Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Trzy kolory: Bialy* (*Three Colours: White*, 1993, Poland/France/Switzerland), and Alejandro Amenábar's *Mar adentro* (*The Sea Inside*, 2004, Spain/France/Italy).
69. See http://culture.coe.fr/Eurimages/eng/eleaflet.html or www.coe.int/T/DG4/Eurimages/Default_en.asp.
70. Council of Europe, "Guide: Support for the Co-Production of Full Lenght Feature Films, Animation, and Documentaries," *Eurimages*, 2000, 9.
71. Jäckel, *European Film Industries*, 78.

72. Council of Europe, *European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1992), 2.
73. Appendix II of the *European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production* states: "1. A cinematographic work qualifies as European . . . if it achieves at least 15 points of a possible of 19, according to the schedule of European elements set out below. 2. Having regard to the demands of the screenplay, the competent authorities may, after consulting together, and if they consider that the work nonetheless reflects a European identity, grant co-production status to the work with a number of points less than the normally required 15 points. *Creative group*: director, 3; scriptwriter, 3; composer, 3. *Performing group*: first role, 3; second role, 2; third role, 1. Technical craft group: cameraman, 1; sound recordist, 1; editor, 1; art director, 1; studio or shooing location, 1; post production location, 1."
74. Council of Europe, *Explanatory Report on the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Productions*, Strasbourg, May 18, 1992, 5.
75. Council of Europe, *Explanatory Report*, 8.
76. See *Treaty on European Union*, Title IX. "Culture," Article 128 (Luxembourg: Council of the European Communities, 1992). The treaty on the European Union can be accessed at http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/EU_treaty.html.
77. Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 73.
78. See the article "Ken Loach and *Land and Freedom*: The Spanish Revolution Betrayed," http://www.wsws.org/arts/1998/aug1998/land-96.shtml.
79. Neil Birrel, review of *Land and Freedom*, *El Pais*, June 10, 1995.
80. Reported by Ian Davies, "Land and Freedom": *The Spanish Civil War and the Locus of Ideology*, http://farlang.edgewood.edu/ian/Kentucky.HTM.
81. As acknowledged by Richard Porton, "Land and Freedom," *Cineaste* 22, no. 1 (Winter 1996): 34.
82. Cf. Paul Fischer, "A Serious Film with a Sense of Humour," interview, www:iofilm.co.uk/feats/interviews/d/danis_tanovic.shtml.
83. See my discussion of Balkanism with reference to the film *Underground* by Emir Kusturica.
84. Peter Bradshaw, "No Man's Land," *The Guardian*, May 17, 2002.
85. See Brian J. Požun, "Hope in the Face of Adversity," *Kinoeye*, www.kinoeye.org/oz/pozun09.php.
86. Tanović asserted: "I was rather excited, even more so than when I was in Cannes. . . . These people lived through the war. As this is a war story, they have an eye which sees in much more detail and they pay attention

to each little detail they see." In "New Perspectives on European Film," *Kinoeye*, www.kinoeye.org/01/02/marritz.02.php.

87. See Ilya Marritz, "New Perspectives on European Film," *Kinoeye*, www.kinoeye.org/01/02/marritz.02.php.
88. Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004). The term is taken to indicate the prejudices attributed to the West that originated in the West itself in the late eighteenth century and then spread toward the Middle East and beyond. They refer to the ideas of materialism, imperialism, capitalism, urbanism, and cosmopolitanism, of which the West is deemed guilty. The authors address specifically the Occidentalism of present-day Islamic radicals and its unknown outcome.
89. "Today nobody needs explain that Jews were victims in World War II. So why the hell should I explain again and again that the Bosnians were victims?" Danis Tanović, "New Perspectives on European Cinema." *Kinoeye*, www.kinoeye.org/01/02/marritz.02.php.
90. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer: Il potere sovrano e la nuda vita* (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), translated as *Homo Sacer*: *Sovereign Power and Naked Life* (Los Angeles: Stanford University Press, 1998). My references are to the Italian edition.
91. See the entire third part of the book *Homo Sacer* entitled "The Camp as the Biopolitical Paradigm of Modernity" and the specific conclusion I report from pages 123–27 of Agamben's text.

CHAPTER 3

1. The film arose out of a collaboration with Tonino Guerra as early as 1976, but only in 1979 was Tarkovsky able to go to Italy and resume the project for a documentary for Italian television entitled *Tempo di viaggio* (*Voyage in Time*). It was then that Tarkovsky and Guerra started working on the film that would be called *Nostalghia*.
   It would be worth investigating the role that the Italian poet and screenwriter played in the films of such different directors in the context of a reassessment of European cinema. In fact, like Fellini and Antonioni (the latter a strong, widely acknowledged influence on Tarkovsky, as are Ingmar Bergman and Robert Bresson), Guerra comes from the Northern Italian region of Emilia, yet he has worked repeatedly with Southern Italian, Greek, and Russian directors, like Francesco Rosi, Giuseppe Tornatore, Theo Angelopoulos, and Tarkovsky himself. Guerra provides a sort of linchpin for the intertextual affinities shared by such widely disparate films, further stretching the concept of national cinema, and suggesting a European dimension among traditionally separate European cinemas.

2. *Nostalghia* was awarded the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival in 1983—together with Robert Bresson's *L'argent*—against the strenuous efforts of another Soviet jury member, Sergei Bondarchuk. This conspiracy theory, in which Tarkovsky firmly believed, can be questioned, but plenty of evidence is offered to support Tarkovsky's complaints about the exhausting negotiations between RAI and Sovinfilm, the bitter struggle with Goskino, and the director's traumatic defection to the West in Tarkovsky's own diary. See Tarkovsky, *Time within Time: The Diaries 1970–1986* (London: Faber & Faber, 2002); *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema* (Austin: Texas University Press, 1986). More information can be gathered from the posthumous homage to Tarkovsky, consisting of memories by his collaborators and entries from his journal, published when he was awarded the Lenin Prize in 1990—in full *perestroika*, but before the August coup of 1991—when he was finally given the public recognition he had been denied in life. See Marina Tarkovskaya, *About Andrei Tarkovsky* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1990). Tarkovsky died in Paris in 1986, only two years after his defection.
3. See Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), originally published as *La fine della modernità* (Milan: Garzanti, 1985).
4. This is both a historical reference—the lunatic asylums had been officially, and controversially, shut down in Italy in 1978—and an act of indictment against humanity as the masterful human being posited by the Enlightenment. In fact, Domenico shouts through the loudspeaker: "Down with masters. . . . It's the so-called healthy who have brought the world to the verge of catastrophe." He then advocates that the "the so-called healthy mix with the so-called sick" as the only possibility for mankind. This view can again be explained through Vattimo's idea of "weak ontology": only by acknowledging human weaknesses, in this case sickness, can Man finally become a man, a historical and finite human being.
5. A further meaning is disclosed, if we consider that Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* had been launched as the official European anthem in 1972 but was officially adopted in 1985 by the heads of state of the then–European Community. The symphony thus carries both the heaviness of Europe's past and the possible lightness of a new status. Another great visionary, Krzysztof Kieslowski, would weave a gripping meditation on the new Europe through the *Ninth Symphony* in his film of 1993, *Blue*.
6. When Tarkovsky first submitted his film proposal, Andrei was supposed to be shot dead by a stray terrorist bullet on his way to the airport in a

taxi. See Andrei Tarkovsky, *Collected Screenplays*, trans. William Powell and Natasha Synessios (London: Faber & Faber, 1999), 42.

7. Tarkovsky's own cinematic career matched the so-called "period of stagnation," which finally exhausted the communist ideology. *Ivan's Childhood*, Tarkovsky's first movie, was in fact awarded the Golden Lion in Venice in 1962, while he had just completed work on *The Sacrifice* when he died in 1986. These dates span closely the "period of stagnation," which endured from the 1960s through the early 1980s. It is also a striking coincidence—or rather, just a confirmation—that another movie from a country under the Soviet regime, Emir Kusturica's *Underground* (1995), similarly equates communism with suspended time, thereby reinforcing the notion of the totalitarian ideology as accomplished by the eradication of time and history.
8. Vattimo defines the concept *Verwindung* in these terms: "It is not an overcoming of the perverted realization of the absolute spirit, . . . but rather a healing of it and a resignation to it." *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 52.
9. See Andrey Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 216.
10. Ibid., 114. In this regard, see Benjamin Halligan's "The Long Take That Kills: Tarkovsky's Rejection of Montage," http://www.pecina.cz/files/www.ce-review.org/oo/39/kinoeye39_halligan.html. Halligan provides examples of an existential long take specifically in *Nostalghia*, but he fails to mention the montage of the final sequence.
11. Even though unwilling to admit it, Tarkovsky could not fail to acknowledge the evidence: "I would concede that the final shot of *Nostalghia* has an element of metaphor, when I bring the Russian house inside the Italian cathedral." Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 215.
12. Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 206.
13. This interview with Tarkovsky appeared in *Il Corriere della Sera*, May 16, 1983, and is reproduced and discussed in Tony Mitchell, "Andrei Tarkovsky and *Nostalghia*," *Film Criticism* 8, no. 3 (1983): 10.
14. The beginning of the letter is a passionate claim of Europeanness by Pushkin: "Of course the schism separated us from the rest of Europe and we took no part in any of the great events which stirred her; but we have had our own mission. It was Russia who contained the Mongol conquest within her vast expanses. The Tartars did not dare cross our western frontiers and so leave us in their rear. They retracted their desert, and Christian civilization was saved. To this end we were obliged to lead a completely separate existence which, while it left us Christian, also made us complete strangers in the Christian world, so that our martyrdom

never impinged upon the energetic development of Catholic Europe." Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 195.

15. A major voice from Central Europe, Milan Kundera, expresses this view in a famed piece, "A Kidnapped West or Culture Bows Out," *Granta* 11, 1984, also published as "The Tragedy of Central Europe" in *The New York Review of Books*, April 26, 1984. When Kundera claims that Central Europe is "the Eastern border of the West," he is actually invoking Europe as the bastion through which he can reassert an identity that he sees as having been "kidnapped" by the Soviet empire. For Tarkovsky making his film in pre-*glasnost* 1983, the idea of a supranational Europe stands as an historical opportunity of freedom and self-determination.
16. Oleg Kovalov, "The Russian Idea: Synopsis for a Screenplay," in *Russia on Reels: The Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema*, ed. Birgit Beumers (London, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 14.
17. In 2002 Alexander Sokurov reprises the question of Russian identity, and the role of Europe in its composition, in a dazzling cinematic excursion, *Russian Ark*. The film consists of one single, continuous shot lasting ninety minutes, as the camera follows a nineteenth-century French aristocrat traveling through the halls of the Russian state Hermitage Museum, as well as three hundreds years of Russian history before the revolution, when he meets historical figures like Peter the Great, Catherine II, Pushkin, and tsar Nicholas II. The realization of this "impossible" long take stands as a manifesto of ideological and cinematic belonging and engages a post-Communist Russia in a disquieting quest for a lost identity.
18. Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie discuss and problematize the position of Tarkovsky as either a tragic victim or "the darling of Goskino," or both, in an engaging chapter titled "Tarkovsky," in *Five Filmmakers: Tarkovsky, Forman, Polanski, Szabo and Makavejev*, edited by Daniel J. Goulding (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 1–50. They observe indeed that even if "Tarkovsky's films were often withheld from the official theater repertoire, they were widely screened at film clubs and workers' institutes." 46–47.
19. Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, 202.

CHAPTER 4

1. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), 4.
2. This construction of the Balkans as produced by a Western imaginary for its own consumption is best explored by Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997), and later Dina Iordanova,

Cinema of Flames: Balkan Film, Culture and the Media (London: BFI, 2001).

3. As I have already indicated, Gianni Vattimo offers a conceptual grid to investigate the present condition of postmodernity that seems highly relevant to the reconfiguration of post–Cold War Europe. In my discussion I have relied on my reading of Vattimo's numerous books: *Le avventure della differenza: la filosofia dopo Nietzsche e Heidegger* (1981); *Il pensiero debole* (1983); *Al di là del soggetto* (1984); *La fine della modernità* (1985); *La società trasparente* (1989); *and Oltre l'interpretazione: il significato dell'ermeneutica per la filosofia* (1994). See chapter 1, note 46.
4. Here I refer to the identification and fundamental interrogation of the *grands récits*, or metanarratives of legitimation, by Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University Minnesota Press, 1984).
5. Vattimo's preference for the use of "late modernity" instead of the more common "postmodernity" and related "postmodern" refers to the fact that "late modernity" still retains that category while the term postmodernity may erroneously seem to have disposed of it by the use of "post." The terms are however interchangeable, as both late modernity and postmodernity are intended to contain and contest modernity.
6. Vattimo discusses Arnold Gehlen's notion of *post-histoire* in *The End of Modernity*, 99–107, and inscribes, or reinscribes, Gehlen's formulation into his own reconceptualization of late modernity, which perfectly substantiates it.
7. Linda Hutcheon bases this constructive articulation of a postmodern poetics on the model of a "double coding" found in architecture and discussed in particular by architect Charles Jenks, *What Is Post-Modernism*? (London: Academy Editions, 1986). Hutcheon's concept of "double encoding" allows her to formulate what she calls "historiographic metafiction"—referring specifically to the novel—as what characterizes postmodernism. This definition would very well apply to *Underground*. See Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York, London: Routledge, 1988).
8. In a marvelously poignant scene the ex-Yugoslavian director speaks intertextually with Federico Fellini, a widely present and acknowledged influence on *Underground*, and more generally on all of Kusturica's films. Here Ivan repeatedly tries to hang himself at night outside a church with the rope of the church bells, until a lunatic, nocturnal vagabond finally stops Ivan's hilarious swinging and saves his life. The most direct reference is to Fellini's *The Voice of the Moon* (1990).

9. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), 253–64.
10. Ibid., 258.
11. Hayden White, "The Modernist Event," *The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television, and the Modern Event* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 21. White prefaces his essay with a citation from Walter Benjamin that seems especially relevant in understanding one of the many layers of *Underground*: "History does not break down into stories, but into images."
12. See Gianni Vattimo, *Oltre l'interpretazione: il significato dell'ermeneutica per la filosofia* (Bari: Laterza, 1994), 13. The translation is mine.
13. Hutcheon, *Poetics of Postmodernism*, x.
14. This may well be an allusion to the white horse in *Sciuscià* (Vittorio De Sica, 1946) and *Ashes and Diamonds* (Andrzej Wajda, 1958), a metaphor of life lost, freedom gone, and brotherhood destroyed. The white horse also recalls, with similiar implications, the motif of "Spring comes on a white horse," which is the cue line the director keeps repeating in the parodic reenactment of the-film-within-the-film.
15. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 257–58.
16. Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, 104.
17. See Slavoj Zižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality* (London, New York: Verso, 1994), 212.
18. Zižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, 212.
19. See Slavoj Zižek, "Multi-culturalism, or, the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism," *New Left Review* 227 (1998): 37–38.
20. Zižek, "Multiculturalism," 39–40. In this context, other films from the Balkans that put into images the construct of "Balkanism" with reference to the break-up of Yugoslavia are *Vukovar Poste Restante* (1994) by Boro Draskovic; *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* (1996) and later *The Wounds* (2001) by Srdjan Dragojević; and *Before the Rain* (1994) by Milcho Manchevski. Even a comedy like *Beautiful People* by Jasmin Dizdar (1999), which is set in London, plays with the concept of litigious, violent, and irrational people from the former Yugoslavia. In particular, the award-winning film *Cabaret Balkan/Powder Keg* (France-Greece-Macedonia-Turkey-Yugoslavia, winner at Venice, and of the EFA in 1998), made by Serbian Goran Paskaljević, specifically addresses the phantasmic investment of the West into the Balkans—in accord with Zižek's conceptualization of "Balkanism,"—in order to expose it. *Cabaret Balkan* would seem to support such a position. Even the original title, *Bure Baruta* or *The Powder Keg*, plays into the fantasy-screen of the Balkans as the powder keg of Europe—a post-Yugoslav Holocaust ravaged by the lack of law and order. A circular narrative mirrors an

iterative, endless cycle of violence: a victimized cab driver turns into a perpetrator; life-long friends turn against each other, and after one is killed, the other will commit suicide while killing bystanders by throwing a grenade in a train; a youngster terrorizes passengers on a bus and will be killed by the bus driver, a former Bosnian school professor. Another Bosnian refugee is initiated to cocaine and sadism, and is ultimately stoned to death for a crime he has not committed while screaming "I'm not guilty." The series of violent acts culminating in the final explosion that reinforces the phantasmic construction of the West is, however, bracketed by a master of ceremonies, who directly addresses the camera at the beginning and end of the film. Wearing garish make-up and filmed against the expressionist décor of a nightclub called "Cabaret Balkan"—which invokes a Greek chorus, as well as the time and cinema of the Weimar Republic via *Cabaret* (1972) by Bob Fosse—the emcee tells the audience, "Welcome to Cabaret Balkan. . . . I'll fuck with you tonight." Paskaljević consciously foregrounds the construct of the Balkans; he consciously stages the spectacle of primitive ethnic passions, irrationality, and chaos to meet the Western spectator's expectations; he deliberately exhibits and denounces the libidinal economy of the West toward the Balkans. He shows how the Western gaze thrives on the sadomasochistic spectacle that it yearns to see, how we are unable to know the Other but return instead to our fantasy, our voyeurism, so that our desire remains intact, to be fulfilled again, in an endless cycle. In the end the emcee, now without make-up and completely drunk, turns his gaze once more upon us, saying "To your health," in an act of utter contempt. By breaking, as well as calling attention to, the fiction, Paskaljević wants to expose the fiction of the Balkan Other and is thus able to criticize the Eurocentric gaze. We are left questioning, though, whether his act of denunciation is a self-reflexive interrogation or ultimately a reinforced opposition.

21. "Canned Lies," http://www.barnsdle.demon.co.uk/bosnia/caned.html.
22. Ibid.
23. Alain Finkielkraut, "L'imposture Kusturica" *Le Monde* (June 2, 1995): 15.
24. Slavoj Zižek, "Multi-culturalism," 37.
25. Nadine Gordimer, "Cannes Epilogue," *New Yorker*, June 19, 1995, 98. Incidentally, Gordimer was a member of the jury at Cannes.
26. Dina Iordanova, "Kusturica's *Underground* (1995): Historical Allegory or Propaganda?" in *The Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 19, no.1 (1999): 69–87.
27. Ibid., 76.
28. Ibid., 74.

29. Incidentally, the son of real life aggressor Slobodan Milošević was also called Marko, and he was known to be involved in illegal economic transactions. It is almost impossible not to see an ironic link between the two Markos.

CHAPTER 5

1. European colonies may show a historical linkage to the "Third World," a category that was a product of the Cold War. In 1955 the world was indeed divided along economic lines and spheres of influence: "First World" came to indicate the industrialized capitalist economies of the West, which included Western Europe, North America, Japan, Australia, and New Zeland, and "Second World" the socialist statism and planned economies of the Soviet Union and its satellites; "Third World" would encompass those countries not aligned with the two superpowers, which were the poorer countries and usually those of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. "Third World" came then to indicate the poorest and underdeveloped nations. This subdivision has undergone significant transformations, if we think, for example, of new categories like those of "Tiger Economies" that carry different connotations, and yet are attributed to previous colonial territories. The majority of the immigrants into the European Union, however, originate among the poorest segments of the populations in the former European colonies and this makes visible the link to the "Third World."
2. See Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994), 39, 40. Shohat had specifically formulated her pointed critique in a previous article, "Notes on the 'Post-colonial,'" *Social Text* 31/32 (1992), 99–113.
3. Aijaz Ahmad has charged postcolonialism with the accusation of "transhistoricity" and a loss of particularity to become "a *global* condition of the relation between the West and the Rest." See his "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality," in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Padmini Mongia (London: Arnold, 1996), 283. Rather, the concept of a postcolonial Europe is historically grounded around the symbolic marker of 1989, and the crumbling of that order known as Cold War, which had inflected the history of decolonization by dividing the world into three unequal parts in 1955. That order had created two new colonizers, the United States and the Soviet Union, to the point that "Cold War internationalism, with its dependent states and its division of the spoils, [had repeated] the Manichaean structure of possession and dispossession experienced in the colonial world" (Homi Bhabha, introduction to *The Wretched of the Earth*, by Frantz Fanon, trans. Richard

Philcox [New York: Grove Press, 2004], xxv). In 1989 one of the superpowers explodes and reveals to have been itself in a colonial status, while "the Rest" set on a journey to the heart of the ex-empires, prompted by the simultaneous phenomenon of globalization.

4. Timothy Garton Ash, "L'Europa dei 27 Stati in cerca di Storia/The Europe of 27 on a Quest for History," *La Repubblica*, January, 5, 2007: 1. The translation is mine.
5. In Canto V of the *Inferno*, Dante meets with Ulysses, who explains that the duty of Man is to travel, acquire knowledge, and arise from the beastlike condition of primitive ignorance in order to realize Mankind. This conceptualization of the Odyssey legitimizes the age of discoveries and colonial expansion on the part of the Western explorers and colonizers. It goes without saying that Man was strictly intended as a male subject.
6. Gianni Volpi, ed. *Gianni Amelio* (Turin: Edizioni Scriptorium, 1995), 153.
7. See my analysis of Kusturica's 1995 film *Underground* in chapter 4. The "Balkans" is not so much a place but a phantasmic projection that has served "as a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the 'European' and 'the West' has been constructed," as historian Maria Todorova first explained in *Imagining the Balkans* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997).
8. The Balkans are not limited to the former Yugoslavia but include Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Albania, Greece, Romania, Moldava and Turkey. These countries have entertained transversal allegiances; for example, Romania has always looked to France, while Slovenia and Croatia have specifically realigned themselves with Central Europe after the breakup of Yugoslavia.
9. See Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990). It was later included in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Padmini Mongia (London: Arnold, 1996) 110–21. I rely on the revised essay.
10. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Disapora," 112.
11. The nonprofessional Di Mazzarelli openly invokes the Italian cinematic tradition of Neorealism that permeates Amelio's film, but the film simultaneously calls into question the tenets of such aesthetics. Despite being firmly grounded in contemporary history, the scenes are accurately planned (Albanians were hired as extras to embody themselves) and filmed in extreme long takes, in epic wide screen, and through desaturated colors, which undermine a documentary truth.
12. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora,"113.

13. Ibid., 112.
14. Homi K. Bhabha, ed. *Nation and Narration* (London, New York: Routledge, 1990), 4.
15. See Rodica Diaconescu-Blumenfeld, "*Lamerica*: History in Diaspora," *Romance Languages Annual* 11 (2000): 167–73.
16. Diaconescu-Blumenfeld, "*Lamerica*: History in Diaspora," 168. Her reading seems to be substantiated by another intertextual component in the film: the ship carrying the illegal immigrants, Michele and Gino, is called nothing less than *Partizani*, that which recalls the partisans in *Paisan* by Rossellini. The fact is that the status and meaning of partisan is highly complex and can be questioned in Rossellini's original text; this would further reflect and split the double positioning of Sicilian and Albanian immigrants into a variety of directions.
17. A film by Alain Berliner, *Le mur* (*The Wall*, 1998), openly addresses the issue by envisioning the crumbling of a wall that separates the Flemish speakers from the French-speaking speakers.
18. The film showcases a cross-fertilization of Neorealism and so-called post–new wave style (à la *Dogme 95*); indications range from the real setting, the nonprofessional actors, and the focus on the outsiders and dispossessed to an unsettling hand-held camera. The Dardennes have made documentaries for years before turning to fiction films, where their realist aesthetics and ethics conjure up references to Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero*, Maurice Pialat's *L'enfance nue*, Robert Bresson's *Mouchette*, and Ken Loach's *Kes*, among others.
19. Two important European films come to mind, *Las cartas de Alou* (*The Letters from Alou*) by Montxo Armendàriz (1990), and *Dirty Pretty Things*, by Stephen Frears (2002), as they both present immigrants from Africa who are able to negotiate, like Assita, a more empowering position in the West, be this Spain or England.
20. The father-son relationship, even when lacking, informs a specific construction of the Belgian imaginary by the Dardennes, as witnessed by their other successes: *Rosetta* (1999), *Le fils* (*The Son*, 2002), *L'enfant* (*The Child*, 2005). These films have all received major awards: *Rosetta*, the Golden Palm and Best Actress at Cannes in 1999; *Le fils*, Best Actor at Cannes and the Prize of the Ecumenical Jury in 2002; and *L'enfant*, the Golden Palm at Cannes 2005. To further underline the pivotal parental relationship, it is worth noting that Olivier Gourmet, who plays the father in *La promesse*, reprises the same role in *Le fils*, while Jérémie Renier, the son in *La promesse*, becomes a father in *L'enfant*.
21. In the context of a discourse on national cinema, Philip Mosley problematizes the existence of a Belgian cinema, arguing that its specificity is precisely not to have any distinctiveness. See Philip Mosley, *Split Screen: Belgian Cinema and Cultural Identity* (New York: New York State

University Press, 2001). The following review of *La promesse* reveals, however, a different mindset: "It is the most Belgian film you can imagine. It is saturated with Belgian culture and reflects the lowest side of our society. During the whole film, we are in the dirt and misery with no hope of progress" (my translation). The acknowledgment from within—the review is in French and originates in Brussels (www.cinebxl.com)—raises questions about the kind of national imaginary that a public domestic discourse constructs and the international critical acclaim seems to endorse, as confirmed by the subsequent successes of the Dardenne Brothers.

22. Michael Haneke shocked the audience at Cannes when he presented *Benny's Video* in 1992, the portrait of a teenager who kills a young girl only to see "how it is," and films it with his video camera. Because of their thematic concerns, this film, Haneke's debut feature *Der siebente Kontinent* (*The Seventh Continent*, 1989), and the subsequent *Funny Games* (1997) have been called "the glaciation" trilogy on ground of the director's own statement that they "are reports of the progression of the emotional glaciation of my country." See Michael Haneke, "Film as Katharsis," as quoted by Mattias Frey in "Michael Haneke," *Senses of Cinema*, http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/03/haneke.html. They have also been identified as his "Austrian films," as they were shot in Austria, in German, and with local funding. For his next films, Haneke received more generous funding from France and Europe and was able to produce his "French films," *La pianiste*, 2001 (*The Piano Teacher*), *Code inconnu*, 2000 *(Code Unknown*), and *Le temps du loup*, 2003 *(The Time of the Wolf*), shot in France and in French. These are the films that have rendered him a transnational European director in terms of coproduction, cultural policy, multicasting, territory, and language. His Austrian films are no less European in their local production and cultural specificity, though. To this regard, Haneke's choice to call the main characters of all his films Georges and Anna—since his early *The Seventh Continent* through *Code Unknown* to *Hidden*—is more than an authorial reaffirmation; it points to a cultural and thematic continuity that from Austria addresses the whole of Europe.
23. Georges is the war phographer who compulsively continues to take pictures of common people on the metro, unbeknownst to them. He poignantly embodies the connection between watching and killing foregrounded by the voice over "I want to watch you die." *Caché* will reinforce the same concept by having his protagonist, Georges, watch as Majid dies.
24. *Code Unknown* brings to mind the representation of the second-generation young *Beur* (French of Arab descent) in *La haine* (*Hate*, 1995), by Mathieu Kassovitz. The last image of this immensely popular film is a

close-up of the young Arab character in the movie, Sayd, after Vinz (the Jewish boy) is shot down by a cop in an act of pointless bravado, while the other friend Hubert (the African young man) holds a gun at the cop. No matter how we problematize the open ending, we are asked to fix our gaze on Sayd's face, the last thing we see. Is this a warning? Does Sayd represent the "pavé," the rock that can be thrown and make French society explode, like the Molotov cocktail that sets the globe on fire at the beginning of the movie? Is the French Arab a new threat? The success of the rightist Le Pen in the elections of 2002, where he captured nearly 20 percent of the popular vote in his bid for the presidency, was mostly based on his anti-immigrant campaign. In a Paris that hosts the largest presence of Arabs in Europe—around six million—they are felt to be like the Moors at the gate of the center under siege. The question is how the marginalized, ex-colonized Arab can write himself into and thus rewrite the fiction of the metropolis.

25. The use of the last name Laurent plays intertexually with *Lost Highway* (1997), a French-American coproduction by David Lynch, which starts out in a similar way, with a videotape left on the doorsteps of the Hollywood house of the Laurent couple.
26. I am referring to Baudrillard's theories as expressed in *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, and Philip Beichtman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983).
27. See the long interview of Michael Haneke with Christopher Sharrett, "The World that Is Known: Michael Haneke Interviewed," *Kinoeye*, http://www.kinoeye.org/04/01/interview01.php.
28. See the canonical text by André Bazin's "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" in *What Is Cinema*, vol. 1, trans. Hugh Gray (London: University of California Press, 1967).
29. Haneke's purported claim that he wants "to rape [his] spectators into autonomy and awareness" clashes with what one among other voices, Catherine Wheatly, perceives to be the director's extreme manipulation, as exemplified by camera angles and POVs to the choice of the usual names of Georges and Anne, which she takes as indications that his characters are "mere puppets." Ultimately, Wheatly asserts that "there is one thing that certainly isn't hidden in Haneke's films, and that's the presence of the director himself" (p. 34). See her "Secrets, Lies and Videotape" in *Sight and Sound* 16, no.2 (2006): 32–35. The *Cahiers* critic, Jean-Pierre Rehm, equally points to the overbearing presence of the director in the film in "Juste sous la surface," *Cahiers du Cinéma* 265 (October 2005): 30–31.
30. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 3.
31. In an interview with Serge Toubiana attached to the DVD version of the film, Haneke observes that France has guarded that secret and does not

seem willing to deal with it. The director reveals how he had first heard about the massacre of the Algerians in Paris in 1961 in a documentary on the European channel ARTE and was dismayed by the discovery. See *Hidden* (*Caché*), Artificial Eye Release, 2005.

32. I have adopted the term "other" in its lower-case transcription in full respect of Levinas' use of the term.
33. Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre nous: On Thinking-of-the-other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshaw (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 9.
34. Levinas, *Entre nous*, 9.
35. Ibid., 11.
36. I am freely summarizing Levinas' words: "The death of the other man puts me in question, as if . . . *I*, through my eventual indifference, became the accomplice; and as if, even before being doomed to it myself, *I* had to answer for this death of the other, and not leave the other alone in his death-bound solitude" (*Entre nous*, 146).
37. Tony Judt has pointed out how, in the monumental book *Le lieux de mémoire*, by Parisian historian Pierre Nora, "a three-part, seven-volume, 5,600-page collective work published over the courses of the years 1984–1992. . . . There is no entry at all on 'Muslims.'" Judt remarks that "this was not an oversight. There was no assigned corner for Islam in the French memory place." See Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 775–776. The fact resonates with Georges' determination to deny meeting with Majid's son. Significantly, Georges expresses the same defensive denial toward alterity when, at the beginning of the film, he screams at a young black man crossing his street: "Watch out, dickhead! . . . In any case, until he torches the house or he sends us bombs instead of cassettes, everything is fine."
38. See the interview with Michael Haneke that accompanies the DVD version of the film.
39. The question of guilt connects *Caché* to Haneke's previous films, like *Benny's Video* (1992), *Funny Games* (1997), and *The Piano Teacher* (2001). The guilt of France addressed in the film echoes the historical guilt of Germany and Austria in World War II and links Haneke to both the New German Cinema of the 1970s and 1980s and the recent Austrian cinema; see, for example, the case of Ulrich Seidl and his devastating *Hundstage* (*Dog Days*, 2001), which tackles the same theme of the guilt of a nation.
40. See *Caché*, Artificial Eye Release, DVD, 2005. Haneke is fully aware of what he has identified as "the irritability of the mainstream cinema spectator who wants the guarantee that when he leaves he can forget what he

has seen." His goal is to undermine such expectations and actively engage and provoke the spectator.

41. This happened at the screening of the film in Cannes, where everybody was taken with conjecturing about the film's ending. See Catherine Wheatley, "Secrets, Lies and Videotape," *Sight and Sound* 16, no. 2 (2006): 34.
42. It is relevant to note how Haneke, critically recognized as the interpreter of the malaise of the Western world in the twenty-first century, whispers a hint that all is not completely dark and hopeless at the end of his French trilogy, *Code Unknown* (2000), *The Time of the Wolf* (2003)—whose last image suggests a kind of redemption as well—and *Hidden* (2005). The fact becomes significant when we think that none of this happens in his Austrian trilogy. Can it be that the director felt a "responsibility" toward the transnational audience, both European and global, which he has addressed in his coproduced films?

CHAPTER 6

1. Eventually Ayaan Hirsi Ali had to leave Holland under repeated threats from Islamic fundamentalists. The event sparked a worldwide debate, with intellectuals taking different positions. In particular, the publication of the book *Murder in Amsterdam—The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance*, by Dutch historian and journalist Ian Buruma, ignited controversial reactions from Mario Vargas Llosa in *El Paìs* and especially the French philosopher Pascal Bruckner, who, in the German online magazine *Perlentaucher*, attacked Buruma (and English journalist Timothy Garton Ash) for "the racism of the anti-racist."
2. See Bernardo Valli's "Se viene il momento del risveglio europeo" ("If Europe Gets Ready to Wake Up") *La Repubblica*, December 29, 2006, 53, (my translation).
3. Council of the European Union, *Decision of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union concerning the implementation of a programme of support for the European audiovisual sector (MEDIA 2007)*, Brussels, June 20, 2006, 11, http://register.consilium-europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st06/st06233.en06.pdf. (emphasis added).
4. *Public Support for the International Promotion of European Films*, European Audiovisual Observatory, February 2006, 6. Emphasis added.
5. This was seconded by Viviane Reding, the representative of the European Commission responsible for the Information Society and Media.
6. European Commission, "European films go global." *Cannes Declaration 2006: Europe Day at the Cannes Film Festival—23 May 2006*, http://ec.europa.eu/informationsociety/doc/media/cannes_declaration_en.pdf.

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Index

12:08 East of Bucharest, 23, 146n20

Africa, 111, 113, 116, 122–25, 128, 129
Agamben, Giorgio, 72–73
Ahmad, Aijaz, 169n3
Akerman, Chantal, 40
Akin, Fatih, 112
Albania, 20, 22, 115–22. *See also* Balkans; Yugoslavia
Algeria, 131, 133, 134, 135, 137, 143
Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), 131. *See also* Algeria
All About My Mother, 61
Almodóvar, Pedro, 61
Alphaville, 24
Amelio, Gianni, 10, 112, 115, 120, 121, 144
American Friend, The, 52
Amin, Samir, 13
Amsterdam, 55
Anderson, Benedict, 2, 143n1
Andrei Rublëv, 89
Angelopoulos, Theo, 61, 160n68
Annila, Antti-Jussi, 144
Antonioni, Michelangelo, 49, 77, 162n1
Arab, 37, 125–26, 131, 134, 135, 136, 137
Argentina, 43
Armendàriz, Montxo, 171n19
Armenia, 63
art cinema, 39, 52
Arte, 158n55, 174n31
Austria, 24, 27
L'Avventura, 49, 50

Bagdad Café, 52
Balkans, 22, 69, 92, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 116, 170n8; Balkanism, 10, 69–71, 92, 105, 107, 108, 117, 167n20; Balkanization, 104–6. *See also* Yugoslavia
Banlieue, 132
Bardiaev, Nikolai, 87
Basque Country, 29
Battle of Algiers, The, 49
Battleship Potemkin, The, 88
Batz, Jean-Claude, 43–44
Baudrillard, Jean, 6, 91, 130
Bazin, André, 4, 86, 130
Beautiful People, 167n20
Becker, Wolfang, 61
Before the Rain, 105, 167n20
Belgium, 16, 20, 24, 27, 36, 68, 122, 123, 125
Belgrade, 92, 106, 107, 108
Benelux, 15
Benichou, Maurice, 127, 135
Benigni, Roberto, 61
Benjamin, Walter, 95, 97, 102
Bentham, Jeremy, 97
Bergfelder, Tim, 48
Bergman, Ingmar, 80
Berliner, Alain, 171n17
Berlin Wall, 1, 13, 21, 24, 53, 67, 68, 92, 113, 139
Bertolucci, Bernardo, 49, 52
Betz, Mark, 155n32
Beur, 127, 143, 173n24
Bible, The, 51
Bicycle Thieves, 4, 45, 46, 119
bipolarism, 1, 2, 14–15, 111. *See also* Cold War
Bitter Rice, 51
Blow Up, 50, 52
Bosna, 71. *See also* Lévy, Bernard-Henri; Yugoslavia
Bosnia, 22, 63, 68, 70, 72–73, 91, 101, 106, 108. *See also* Balkans; Yugoslavia
Breaking the Waves, 61
Buchareb, Rachid, 143

Bulgaria, 13, 22, 24, 114, 139
Buruma, Ian, 71, 161n88

Cabaret Balkan, 71, 167n20. *See also* Balkanism
Caché, 10, 112, 125, 129–35, 141, 172n23, 175n39, 40. *See also* Levinas, Emmanuel; postcolonialism
Cannes Film Festival, 67, 89, 91, 106, 108, 122, 125, 143
Cantet, Laurent, 144
Catalonia, 29, 37, 47, 65
Cattaneo, Peter, 61
Ceausescu, Nicolae, 22, 23
Centre Nationale de la Cinématographie (CNC), 44, 59
Cerović, Stanko, 106
Chains, 5, 45
Churchill, Winston, 13,14
Cinecittà, 50
citizenship, 35, 36, 37, 55, 57, 59, 142, 143
Code inconnu, 10, 112, 125–27, 135, 136, 141, 173n24. *See also* colonialism; postcolonialism
Cold War, 1, 6, 13–14, 21, 39, 77, 87, 92, 116, 117, 139. *See also* bipolarism; post–Cold War
colonialism, 8–10, 19, 20, 25, 31, 34, 38, 111–13, 132, 137, 141, 143; in *Caché*, 132, 133, 134; in *Lamerica*, 115–18; in *La promesse*, 120–23, 128. *See also* postcolonialism
Common Market, 9, 18, 42, 44, 50, 54
Communism, 1, 6, 8, 16, 20, 55, 66, 67, 82, 83, 85, 88, 94–99, 100, 101, 103, 107, 108, 113, 116, 117, 118. *See also* colonialism; "Other Europe"
Conan the Barbarian, 51
Conformist, The, 49
Contempt, 49, 52
coproductions, 2–4, 8–9, 30, 39–44, 77, 107, 115, 125, 140–39, 142; cofinancing, 4, 64; and international cinema, 48–53; post–Cold War, 53–65; post–World War II, 41–44; proportional system, 42, 63. *See also* Europeanism; supranationalism; transnational
Council of Europe (COE), 15, 18, 53, 62
Croatia, 22, 91, 106, 107, 108. *See also* Balkans; Yugoslavia
culture, 4, 5, 7, 9, 17, 33–34, 40, 44, 46, 54–58, 60, 64, 65, 128, 140, 142, 143, 144, 157n48, 49
Culture 2000, 55, 57; *Eurimages* and culture, 62, 63. *See also* Europeanism; identity
Cyprus, 24
Czechoslovakia, 13, 22; Czech Republic, 24, 61; Slovakia, 24

Dancer in the Dark, 61
Dahrendorf, Ralph, 23–24, 36
Dante, 114, 170n5
Dardenne, Luc and Jean-Pierre, 10, 112, 122, 171n18, 20
Davies, Norman, 17, 20
Days of Glory, 143
Dayton Peace Agreement, 68, 73, 91
decline, 30–34, 81, 103. *See also* "weak thought"
Degand, Claude, 44
De Gaulle, Charles, 18
De Grazia, Victoria, 18
De la Iglesia, Eloy, 112
De Laurentis, Dino, 50
Delors, Jacques, 25, 157n50
Denmark, 24, 27
De Santis, Giuseppe, 51
De Sica, Vittorio, 4, 46, 119
Diaconescu-Blumenfeld, Rodica, 120
dialectics, 79, 83, 84–86, 96, 97, 100–101, 105
diaspora, 118, 121, 124, 125, 128, 135, 143
Dirty Pretty Things, 112
Divina Commedia, 114
Dog Days, 175n39
Dogme 95, 171n18
Dolce vita, La, 49, 51
Don Camillo, 5, 45, 144n6
Dutch. *See* Netherlands
Duvivier, Julien, 45

L'Eclisse, 49, 50
EFDO, 58
Eisenstein, Sergei, 85, 88
Elsaesser, Thomas, 57, 59, 66, 143n4
Emerson, Michael, 30
England. *See* Great Britain

Enlightenment, The, 4, 7, 92, 105–6, 125
essentialism, 7, 112
Estonia, 24, 144
Euratom, 17
Eurimages fund, 53, 58, 61–63, 65, 68, 115, 122, 125, 140, 159n66, 160n68
Euro, 2, 27, 140; European Monetary Union (EMU), 27, 140
EUROAIM, 58
Eurocentrism, 5, 7–8, 31, 34, 111–14. *See also* colonialism; postcolonialism
EUROMED, 60
Euronews, 158n55
EUROPA CINEMAS, 59–61, 140
European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), 15, 16, 17
European Community, 24–26, 28; Central Bank, 27; Council of Ministers, 25–26; Court of Justice, 27; European Commission, 25–26, 175n6; Parliament, 25–26. *See also* European Union; supranationalism; transnational
European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production, 4, 58, 60, 62–63, 65, 140, 160n73; "European cinematographic work," 63
European Economic Community (EEC), 9, 24, 42, 54. See also Common Market; European Union; Treaty of Rome
European Film Academy, 59, 60, 68, 140
European Film Awards (EFA), 60–61, 68, 125, 140, 159n63
"European idea," 13–14. *See also* Europeanism.
Europeanism, 13, 15, 17–21, 25, 27, 29, 34–35, 39, 41, 44, 53–56, 61, 63, 65–68, 73, 140, 142. *See also* culture; identity; supranationalism
European Union (EU), 2, 23, 24, 27, 29, 33, 36–38, 40, 60, 66, 68, 79, 113, 112, 122, 139, 140, 143. *See also* European Community; European Market; Treaty of Maastricht; Treaty of Rome
Europudding, 64
exile, 38, 78, 88–89, 114, 118
extracomunitari, 8

Fabuleux destin de Amélie Poulain, Le, 61
Fahrenheit 451, 52
Fanon, Frantz, 132
Fascism, 4, 21, 43, 45, 67, 101, 116
Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 47
Fellini, Federico, 49, 51, 77, 166n8
"Film Europe," 152n1
film festival, 59, 159n58
Finkielkraut, Alain, 106
Finland, 24, 27, 28
Flanders, 36, 122
Foucault, Michel, 29–30, 97
Fowler, Catherine, 39
France, 16, 20, 24, 27, 41, 43, 44, 49, 57, 68, 125, 126, 135, 137, 142, 143
Franco, Francisco, 21, 29, 67
Frears, Stephen, 112, 172n19
Frenay, Henri, 44
Freud, Sigmund, 37
Full Monty, The, 61

Garton Ash, Timothy, 114
General Agreements on Tariff and Trade (GATT), 55–57. *See also* culture
Germany, 16, 20, 21, 27, 43, 47, 49, 57; Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), 16
Germany Year 90 Nine Zero, 23, 146n22, 147n24
Germany Year Zero, 23, 147n23
Giannelli, Enrico, 44
Glasnost, 22, 77, 88–89
Globalization, 1, 6, 9, 21, 29–30, 33, 35, 55, 56, 57, 135, 139, 140, 141, 143, 144
Glucksman, André, 106
Godard, Jean-Luc, 23–24, 49, 52, 94
Golden Coach, The, 49
Good Bye Lenin, 61
Gorbachev, Mikhail, 2, 22, 25, 66, 77, 148n33. *See also* Cold War; *Nostalghia*
Gordimer, Nadine, 107
Goskino, 77, 89, 162n2
Grand Illusion, The, 71
grands récits, 5, 32, 34, 92, 101, 105. *See also* Vattimo, Gianni
Great Britain, 15, 20, 24, 50, 67, 68, 147n27, 157n66; British cinema, 47
Greece, 21, 24, 148n28, 35
Gualino, Riccardo, 44
Guerra, Tonino, 77, 162n1
Gutiérrez, Chus, 112

Habermas, Jürgen, 34–35, 38
Hakin, Fatih, 61
Hall, Stuart, 118
Handke, Peter, 106
Haneke, Michael, 10, 61, 112, 125, 126, 129–35, 172n22, 174n29, 175n39, 42
Harvey, David, 9
Hate, 173n24
Havel, Václav, 22, 150n47
Hayward, Susan, 40
Heading South, 143
Head On, 61, 112
Hegelianism, 6, 92, 104
Heidegger, Martin, 32
hermeneutics, 100, 105. *See also post-histoire*; "weak thought"
heterogeneousness, 3, 6, 30, 34, 36, 47, 48, 141
Higson, Andrew, 45, 152n1
Hill, John, 47
Hirsi Ali, Ayaan, 142, 175n1
history, 5, 10, 23, 32, 38; in *Caché*, 129; in *Nostalghia* 82, 83, 88; in *Underground*, 91–105, 107, 108. See also *grands récits*; *post-histoire*
Holland. *See* Netherlands
Hollywood, 43, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57
Homage to Catalonia, 65
homo sacer. *See* Agamben, Giorgio
Hoxha, Enver, 114
Hungary, 13, 22, 24
Huston, John, 51
Hutcheon, Linda, 101, 166n7

identity, 2–5, 7–8, 17, 19, 24, 30, 31–34, 37–38, 40, 56, 59, 62, 64, 70, 73, 118–17, 140–42; in *Code inconnu*, 126; in *Lamerica*, 116–20; in *Land and Freedom*, 64–66; in *Nostalghia*, 78, 86, 88; in *La Promesse*, 124. See also culture; Europeanism; supranationalism
immigrant. *See* migration
international cinema. *See* coproductions: and international cinema
In This World, 112
Iordanova, Dina, 69, 106, 107
Ireland, 24, 27
Iron Curtain, 13, 78, 92, 113, 139. *See also* Cold War; "Other Europe"
Italy, 4, 16, 20, 24, 41, 43, 44, 68; in *Lamerica* 115–22; in *Nostalghia*, 78, 79, 83
Ivan's Childhood, 89

Jäckel, Anne, 62
Jade Warrior, 144
Jameson, Fredric, 6
Jaruzelski, Wojciech, 22
Jeunet, Jean-Pierre, 61
Jireš, Jaromil, 61
Judt, Tony, 37, 174n37

Kassovitz, Mathieu, 173n24
Kieślowski, Krzysztof, 61, 160n68, 163n5
Kinder, Marsha, 8, 28, 143n4
Kohl, Helmut, 25
Kosovo, 22, 91, 126. *See also* Balkans; Yugoslavia
Kovalov, Oleg, 88
Krämer, Peter, 52
Kundera, Milan, 164n15
Kusturica, Emir, 10, 91, 93–108, 117

Labor Party of Marxist Unification (POUM), 65–66, 72
Lamerica, 10, 112, 115–20, 141. *See also* postcolonialism; south
Lana's Rain, 71
Land and Freedom, 9, 40, 61, 64–68, 72, 73, 141
Landscape in the Mist, 61
Lang, Fritz, 95
Last Emperor, 52
Last Laugh, The, 24
Last Tango in Paris, 49, 52
Last Year at Marienbad, 49
Latvia, 24, 142
Leopard, The, 48
Letters from Alou, The, 171n19
Lev, Peter: and "Euro-American cinema," 52–53
Levinas, Emmanuel, 134–33,174n34
Lévy, Bernard-Henri, 71–72, 106
Liehm, Mira, 40
Life is Beautiful, 61
Lili Marleen, 97
Lilya 4-ever, 112
Lithuania, 24

Lives of Others, The, 61
Loach, Ken, 9, 40, 61, 64–67, 72
local, 3, 29–33, 41, 48, 58, 65, 113, 141
Lost Highway, The, 174n25
Lumet, Sidney, 51
Luxembourg, 16, 24, 27; Luxembourg Compromise, 18, 27
Lynch, David, 173n25
Lyotard, Jean François, 5–6, 32, 34, 35, 92–93

Maastricht Treaty, 2, 9, 24–25, 29, 33, 36, 39, 54, 55, 65, 66, 78, 139, 140, 147n25
Macedonia, 22
Malta, 24
Manchevski, Milche, 105, 167n20
Margalit, Avishai, 161n88
Marra, Vincenzo, 112
Marshall Plan, 16, 17, 42, 153n13
Marxism, 82, 84, 88, 92, 104
master narratives. See *grands récits*
Matarazzo, Raffaello, 5, 45
MEDIA Program, 53, 58–59, 65, 125, 142, 143, 157n55
Mediterranean, 60
Melucci, Alberto, 55
Metropolis, 95
migration, 8, 10, 38, 61, 113–12, 118, 120, 123, 125, 128, 132, 135, 136, 141, 142, 144
Mikhalkov, Nikita, 61
Milius, John, 51
Mirror, The, 87
Missing Star, The, 144
modernity, 6–7, 10, 72, 81, 92–93, 98, 103, 114, 166n5
Moldova, 142
Monaco, Eitel, 44
Monnet, Jean, 15, 140
montage, 80, 85–86
Montenegro, 22, 91, 106, 108. *See also* Balkans; Yugoslavia
Moodysson, Lukas, 112
More, Thomas, 102
Morley, David, 31
Moscow, 1, 14, 53, 67, 89
Mosley, Philip, 172n21
Motion Picture Export Association (MPEA), 43, 47, 50–53, 57, 153n13
Mur, Le, 171n17
Mussolini, Benito, 115
Myoshi, Masao, 34, 35, 151n53

national, 3–5, 15, 18, 26–33, 35, 36, 37, 41–44, 48, 50, 54, 55, 56, 63, 64, 65, 70, 113, 140, 141. *See also* local; regionalism; supranationalism; transnational
national cinema, 16, 39–41, 44–49, 51
nation-state, 3, 16,19, 28, 29, 34–37, 47, 48, 54, 55, 70, 92, 113, 140
Nazism, 14, 95
neocolonialism. *See* postcolonialism
neorealism, 4–5, 44, 46, 47, 171n11
Netherlands, 16, 20, 24, 27, 142
New German Cinema, 46, 47, 57
Nice, 55
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 32
Ninth Symphony, 81, 163n5
No Man's Land, 9, 40, 64, 68–73, 141
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 15
Nostalghia, 9, 77–90, 117, 141, 162n2
nostalgia, 66, 77, 86–87, 93
Notte, La, 49, 50
Los novios búlgaros, 112
Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey, 49

"Occidentalism," 7, 71, 161n88
Odyssey, 10, 114, 115, 122, 125, 170n5
Oedipal trajectory, 124
"ontology of decline." *See* decline; "weak thought"
Open Doors, 61
orientalism, 7, 116, 120, 124
Orwell, George, 65
"Other Europe," 13, 17, 20, 21, 25, 34, 77, 92, 105, 113, 141. *See also* Cold War; colonialism; Iron Curtain

Paisan, 4, 44–45, 52, 116, 153n10, 171n16
panopticon, 97
Papandreu, Andreas, 22
Paris, 125, 127, 128, 129, 132, 137
Paris, Texas, 52
partisans, 95, 98, 171n16. *See also* resistance movement

Paskaljević, Goran, 167n20
Pasolini, Pier Paolo, 121
Passenger, The, 52
Peppone and Don Camillo. *See Don Camillo*
Perestroika, 22, 77, 88, 162n2
Persona, 79
Petite Lola, La, 112
Poland, 22, 24
Poniente, 112
Pontecorvo, Gillo, 49
Popper, Karl, 30–31, 149n44
Portugal, 20, 24, 148n28
Porumboiu, Cornelieu, 23
post–Cold War, 1, 3–4, 34, 35, 40, 41, 55, 58, 64, 78–79, 92, 106, 111, 122. *See also* Berlin Wall
postcolonialism, 8, 10, 111–14, 118–18, 125, 128, 129, 132, 135, 137, 169n3; neocolonialism, 111–12, 116, 119, 120, 123, 136, 141. *See also* colonialism
post-histoire, 92–93, 103–4. *See also* hermeneutics; postmodernity; "weak thought"
postmodernity, 6, 57, 91, 92, 94, 101, 103. *See also* modernity; "weak thought"
postnational, 3, 35, 48
Pretty Village, Pretty Flame, 71, 167n20
Promesse, La, 10, 112, 122–23, 141
Pushkin, Alexander, 87, 164n14

Ray, Satyajit, 46
realism, 85–86; socialist realism, 89
regionalism, 3, 28–33, 48, 55, 65; Committee of the Regions, 28; Conference of the Peripheral Maritime Regions, 28; Euroregions, 28. *See also* local; national; supranationalism; transnational
Renaissance, 79, 114
Renoir, Jean, 49, 71
resistance movement, 4, 45, 94, 98
Resnais, Alain, 49
Riff-Raff, 61
Risorgimento, 48
Robins, Kevin, 31
Rocco and His Brothers, 49, 117
Roma, città aperta, 45, 46
Roman Holiday, 52
Romania, 13, 22, 23, 24, 114, 125, 126, 139, 142
Ross, George, 18, 19
Rossellini, Roberto, 4, 23, 44, 52, 116
Russia, 13; in *Nostalghia* 79–84, 86–89
Russian Ark, 165n17
"Russian Idea," 87, 88. *See also Nostalghia*
Russian Idea, The, 88

Said, Edward, 6, 7, 144n10. *See also* orientalism
Santer, Jacques, 26
Sarajevo, 68, 69, 70, 106, 108
Schengen, 118
Schlesinger, Philip, 48, 54
Schuman Plan. *See* Schuman, Robert
Schuman, Robert, 15, 16
Sciuscià, 4, 46
Sconosciuta, La, 112
SCRIPT, 58
Senso, 48
Serbia, 22, 68, 91, 106, 107, 108. *See also* Balkans; Yugoslavia
Serpico, 51
Shohat, Ella, 7, 112
Short Film about Killing, A, 61
Sicily, 45, 117–18, 121, 122. *See also* south
simulacrum, 91, 130
Single European Market, 2, 147n26
Sirk, Douglas, 47
Six, The, 16, 19, 20, 24
Slovenia, 22, 24, 28, 68, 70, 91, 106, 107, 148n35. *See also* Balkans; Yugoslavia
Smith, Anthony D., 36–37, 151n62
Sokurov, Alexander, 165n17
Solidarity, 22
Sontag, Susan, 31
Sorlin, Pierre, 154n20
south, 117–20
Soviet Union, 1, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 20, 25, 67, 77, 82, 88
Spain, 21, 24, 29, 43, 49, 67, 72, 146n19, 148n28; in *Land and Freedom*, 65–67, 72; Spanish cinema, 47
Spengler, Oswald, 31
Stagnation, 77, 88
Stalinism, 65
Stam, Robert, 7
Stolen Children, 61

Strada, La, 51
Stromboli, 52
Submission, 142
subsidiarity, 28
supranationalism, 2–5, 8–9, 14–21, 25–35, 37–38, 39–41, 42, 47, 54, 56, 57, 61, 63, 65, 113, 139, 140, 141, 142, 145n4. See also European Union; local; national; regionalism; transnational
Sweden, 24, 27
Switzerland, 54

Talk to Her, 61
Tanović, Danis, 9, 40, 64, 68–73, 162n89
Tarkovsky, Andrei, 9, 77–89, 117, 162n2, 163n7, 164n11
Tavernier, Bertrand, 112
Telemacus, 119
Television Without Frontiers Directive (TVWF), 53–54, 65
Thatcher, Margaret, 29, 147n27
Theses on the Philosophy of History, 96
Third World, 34, 116, 121, 169n1
Tito, Josip Broz, 22, 92, 95, 98–100
Todorova, Maria, 69
Tornando a casa, 112
Tornatore, Giuseppe, 112
transnational, 2, 30, 33, 35, 40, 41, 43, 47, 48, 50, 53, 56, 60, 67, 113, 141, 143. *See also* European Union; local; national; regionalism; supranationalism
Treaty of Brussels, 15
Treaty of Maastricht. *See* Maastricht Treaty
Treaty of Rome, 9, 17, 25, 33, 42
Treaty of Yalta, 13
Turkey, 47, 63, 139, 148n29

Ukraine, 28, 63,140
Ulysses, 114
Underground, 10, 91–108, 117, 141, 163n7. *See also* Balkanization; history; postmodernity
UNESCO, 157n53
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). *See* Soviet Union
United Kingdom. *See* Great Britain
United Nations (UN), 19, 68, 71, 73, 115
Unthinking Eurocentrism, 7
Urga, 61
Utopia, 66, 77, 79, 82, 83, 86–88, 102–3

Van Gogh, Theo, 142
Vattimo, Gianni, 6, 10, 31–32, 47, 81–83, 92–93, 103, 166n5. *See also* "weak thought"
Verwindung, 32–33, 82–83, 85
Visconti, Luchino, 48, 49, 117
Voice of the Moon, The, 166n8
Von, Donnersmarck, Florian Henckel, 61
Von Trier, Lars, 61, 160n68
Voyage to Italy, 52
Vukovar poste restante, 71, 167n20

Walesa, Lech, 22
Wallonia, 122
Warsaw, 60
"weak ontology." *See* "weak thought"
"weak thought," 6, 32–33, 81, 92, 163n4; "weakening"/"weakened," 7, 9, 32, 47–48, 79, 82–86, 92–93, 103–4. *See also* postmodernity; Vattimo, Gianni
Welcome to Sarajevo, 71
Wenders, Wim, 52
Western European Union (WEU, 1954), 15, 17
White, Hayden, 99
whodunit, 129, 136
Winterbottom, Michael, 112
World War I, 6, 31
World War II, 1, 13–14, 16, 41, 49, 52, 67, 78, 93, 139
Wounds, The, 71, 167n20
Wyler, William, 52

Yeats, William Butler, 5
Yeltsin, Boris, 22, 148n33
Yugoslavia, 10, 13, 22, 36, 43, 68, 70, 91–95, 99, 101, 102, 105, 106, 107,108, 145n1. *See also* Balkanism; Balkans

Zabriskie Point, 52
Zafranović, Lordan, 58
Zižek, Slavoj, 69, 105–8, 167n20